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FAME ^{AND} FORTUNE WEEKLY.

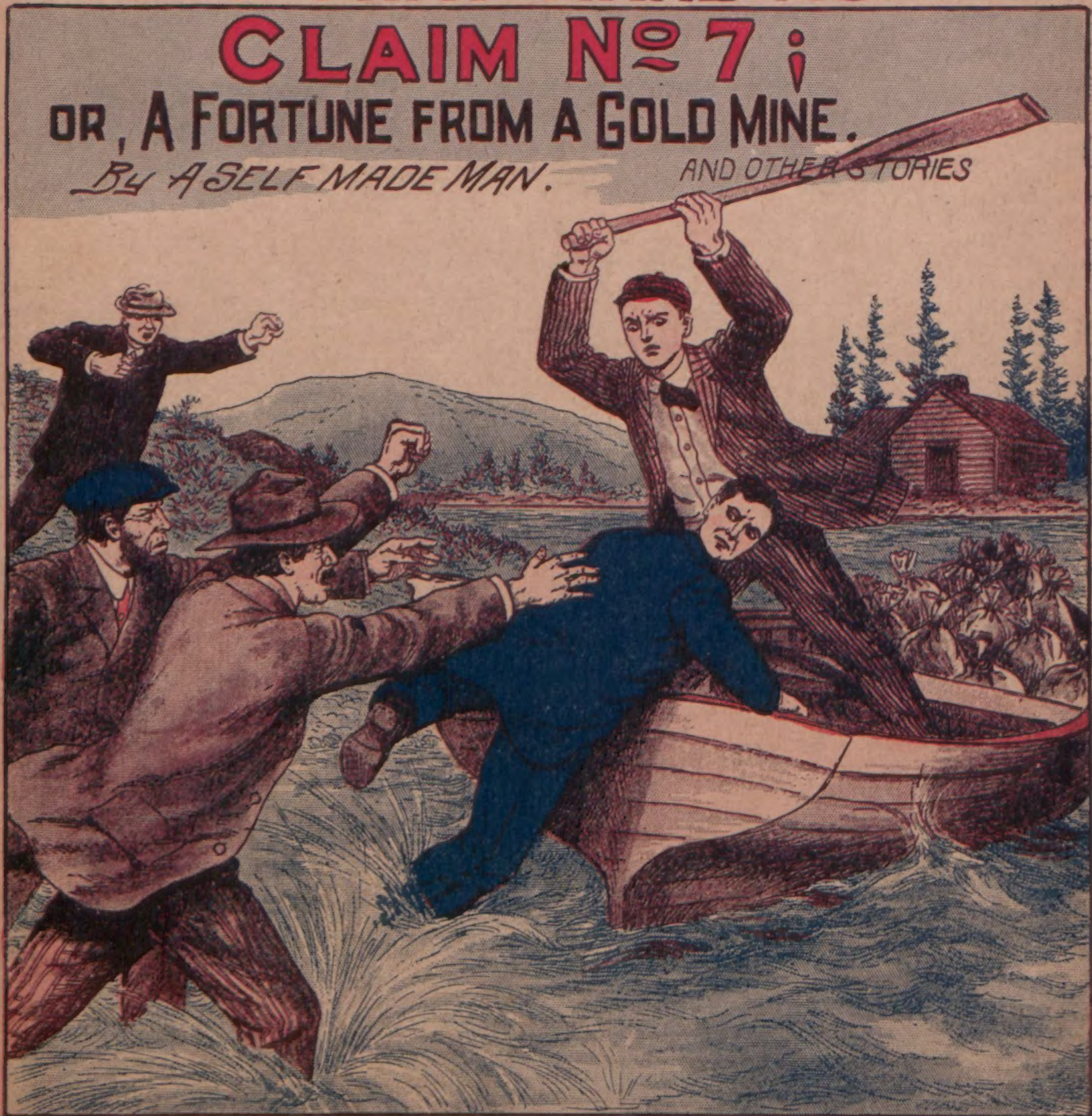
STORIES OF

BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

CLAIM No 7 ;
OR, A FORTUNE FROM A GOLD MINE.

By A SELF MADE MAN.

AND OTHER STORIES



"Come back here or it'll be worse for you!" roared Dave Hamlin, rushing into the water, followed by his two associates. "Stand back or I'll smash you!" cried Tom in a resolute tone, flourishing the oar to cover Bob's retreat.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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NEW YORK, AUGUST 23, 1918.

Price 6 Cents.

CLAIM No. 7

—OR—

A FORTUNE FROM A GOLD MINE

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

A MEXICAN MAID.

"Say, Tom, this Senorita Pepita is a peach," said Bob Gillette, nodding at the handsome sixteen-year-old daughter of Sebastian Castano, landlord of the little old-fashioned Mexican inn at which the two American boys had stopped for rest and refreshment.

This inn stood on the outskirts of a small rustic village in the foothills of the Sierra de Antunez mountain range, twenty miles east of the Sonora railway, and about seventy-five miles, as the crow flies, south by east, of Nogalez, Arizona, a town close to the Mexican border, where the Sonora line connected with the Southern Pacific railroad.

The scenery roundabout was characteristic of northern Mexico.

The valley, through which a dusty road wound like a long yellow ribbon, was fertile with semi-tropical tress and vegetation, with a detached hacienda here and there, its white-washed walls peeping out from amid a mass of green foliage.

The inn was right beside the road, on a curve that faced the range.

The two boys, seated at a table under the spreading shade of a large tree which overlapped the low-roofed building, had the mountains, rising peak on peak, before them, in solitary grandeur.

Upon one of the steeps, overlooking a deep ravine, stood a low rambling building, built of stone and partially surrounded by a high wall.

Above the entrance gate was a cross, large enough to be seen from the inn.

This was the monastery of the Black Brotherhood, an order of mendicant monks, so the boys had been told at Magdalena, where they got off the train.

"Bet your life she is," replied Tom Hammond, in answer to his friend's remark, as he sipped a cool drink with great satisfaction, for the weather was hot enough to do credit to the infernal regions.

"This is where you've got it on me," said Bob.

"How?" asked Tom lazily.

"Why, you speak Spanish like a native, while I don't know more than half a dozen words of the lingo. You have been carrying on a flirtation with the senorita ever since we've been here, and she's been making eyes at you like a house afire. All I can do is to sit like a dummy and see you enjoy all the fun," growled Bob.

"Jealous, are you?" chuckled Tom.

"No, I ain't jealous, but I'd like to have a look-in on what's going on."

At that moment Senorita Pepita came to the door and turned her lustrous eyes upon Tom Hammond, with a sort of "goo-goo" glance that was decidedly bewitching.

Her attire, although made of ordinary materials, was on the whole rather chic and picturesque, and a jaunty head-dress of bright colors set off her dark locks to much advantage.

Tom motioned to her, and she approached the table.

"So your name is Pepita?" he said, in Spanish.

"Si, senor," she replied, with a little courtesy.

"I suppose you have guessed that we are Americans?"

"Si. But you speak my language beautifully, senor."

"My mother taught me. She was a Cuban."

Pepita smiled.

"Your friend—does he also speak Spanish?"

"I regret to say he does not. He regrets it, too, but never so much as now."

"Why, senor?"

"Because he is deprived of the pleasure of speaking to such a bewitching creature as yourself."

"Oh, senor!" cried Pepita with a blush, at the same time looking at Bob in a way that made him suspect he was the subject of his friend's last remark.

"Here, I say, Tom, what are you telling her about me?" he asked.

"I told her you called her a peach," grinned Tom.

"Do you want to make a donkey of me?"

"Not at all. Nature has done that already."

"Oh, come off! Don't get so funny!"

At that moment a distant chant or chorus reached their ears.

The boys looked in the direction whence it came.

Filing down the narrow pathy that ran from the road to the gate of the monastery they saw a procession of dark-robed men with cowls over their heads.

At that distance they looked for all the world like a black caterpillar crawling along the circuitous path.

One man walked a little distance ahead of the others.

He bore a large white cross in front of him.

The chant was slow and measured, and the monks kept pace with it.

"I suppose those are the monks of the Black Brotherhood, Pepita?" said Tom.

"Si, senor."

"They dwell in that building on the mountain side?"

"Si, senor."

"And how do they live?"

"Oh, they live well."

"I'll gamble on it they do. The clergy of all countries take especial good care to do that," laughed Tom.

"What are you two talking about now?" asked Bob. "I wish you'd speak United States."

"What did your friend say?" asked the girl, with womanly curiosity.

"He said your beauty has quite fascinated him, and he wishes he could talk with you," chuckled Tom.

Senorita Pepita blushed and turned a coquettish glance on Bob.

"Say, cut it out, will you?" growled Tom.

"What's troubling you now, my dear fellow?"

"You're talking about me again. That isn't a fair deal."

"Go on, you're dreaming! She asked me a question and I answered it."

"It was something about me, for after you answered she gave me one of her goo-goo looks."

"Maybe she's mashed on your shape."

"Mashed on nothing! I'll bet you two are making fun of me because I can't understand your blamed lingo."

"Your friend seems to be provoked at something," said Pepita, who noticed that Bob seemed annoyed.

"I think the chant of the Black Brotherhood yonder doesn't suit his fancy. He remarked just now that it reminded him of the tune the old cow warbled."

The girl looked puzzled at the latter part of Tom's answer.

Catching sight of the boy's laughing eyes, she pouted:

"The senor is making fun of me."

"I wouldn't think of doing such a thing, senorita."

"You haven't told me your names, senor," she said, after a doubtful look.

"Ah, mine is Tom Hammond. My friend's is Bob Gillette. Make a bow, Bob," he added in English to his friend.

"I'm introducing you."

Bob made a bow.

The senorita immediately courtesied.

"Where did you come from, and why did you come out here?" she asked.

"We came from New York City."

"New York City," she repeated, as if trying to locate the place. "That is in the United States."

"It was when we left there, and I don't believe it has moved away."

The girl didn't seem to catch on to the humor of his remark.

"It is a big city—yes?"

"Rather. There are buildings there from twenty to thirty stories high."

"The senor is joking," she replied, with an incredulous look.

"No. That's the truth. There are some—a few—that height."

Pepita looked astonished.

"Well, my friend and I live there when we're at home. We came West to Tucson, Arizona, to see my friend's father, who is in the mining business in that neighborhood. This is our vacation time. We have ten weeks in which to have a good time. After remaining a week at the mine we decided, as we were so near Mexico, that we'd take a run down along the Sonora railway and look at the country. We stopped off at Magdalena yesterday afternoon, and hearing about this Monastery of the Black Brotherhood, we concluded to come over and take a look at it, for the landlord of the inn we put up at last night told us it was two or three hundred years old, and a place of considerable interest."

"Oh, you can't go there, Senor Hammond," said Pepita.

"Why can't we?"

"Because no strangers are ever admitted."

"Aren't they? What a pity! We've taken our jaunt for nothing, then? No, not for nothing, for we've seen you, and that is a great pleasure," said Tom gallantly.

Pepita smiled and looked pleased at the compliment.

She was quite taken with Tom's good-looking face, and free-and-easy manners.

In fact, she had a very friendly feeling for Americans, for her mother, who was dead, had been a native of the United States.

She herself had never learned to speak English, probably because her mother died when she was quite young, and though her father understood the language, he never spoke it except when he had dealings with Americans who did not understand Spanish.

By this time the procession of the monks had drawn near, and it was evident they intended to pass along the road in front of the inn.

The boys would, therefore, get a close view of them, even if they couldn't get into the monastery.

They continued their solemn chorus without intermission. "It's a wonder those chaps don't get tired of that song," said Bob. "They keep repeating the thing over and over again. I suppose that's a Spanish hymn of some kind."

"No, that isn't Spanish."

"What is it, then?"

"I judge it is Latin. The Catholic clergy use that altogether in their religious exercises."

"So I've heard, but I never could understand it. Very few people understand it."

"It's the custom of the Catholic Church, and as it's the oldest in the world we must assume that the priests know their business and what is best for the people. Religion and politics are two things I don't care to argue about, so let's talk about something else."

CHAPTER II.

PRYING INTO THE MYSTERIOUS.

In a few minutes the procession of dark-robed and cowed men, for even their faces, which they held down, as if looking at the ground, were invisible, passed by, en route for the little village.

"I'd hate to pass my life in that lonesome-looking building, and put in my time singing and praying," remarked Bob, looking after the monks.

"I believe in letting every one follow his own taste," replied Tom. "They don't do anybody any harm, and probably they do a lot of good in their way. At any rate, the inhabitants around here believe in them, I guess. Pepita told me that they live well, and who knows what fun they may not have all by themselves up in their monastery?"

"Well, suppose we go up there now? It may be a good time to see the place when most of them are away. You know we came out here expressly to see it, and I'm just dying with curiosity to get in there and look around."

"Then I'm afraid you'll be disappointed."

"Why so? Are you going to back out after getting as far as this?" asked Bob, with a look of displeasure.

"Me back out? Say, have you ever known me to be a quitter?"

"Then what are you talking about?"

"Pepita says that strangers are never admitted to the monastery."

"Well, if that wouldn't jar you!" cried his companion, looking disgusted.

"However, if we can't get inside, there is no law, I guess, preventing us from going up there and taking a close view from the outside."

"I'm with you," replied Bob with alacrity.

"Well, let's have another refreshment first. That drink Pepita fetched us goes to the right spot. There is nothing intoxicating about it, and it tastes good."

"That's right. Tell her to fetch two more."

Tom gave the order to the girl, and she brought the drinks to them in a few minutes.

"We're going to take a close view of that monastery, Pepita," said Tom, after paying her. "That is, from the outside, seeing that we can't get inside."

"From the outside!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, though we're both greatly disappointed because we can't see the relics, and all that, we've heard are in there."

"No, you mustn't go there, senor," replied the girl, a bit earnestly.

"I don't see anything to stop us," said Tom. "The road, and the path beyond, will take us straight there without any trouble. If we only had a telescope we could sit up on one of those rocks and see you standing at the door of this inn."

"No, I don't want you to go there, senor."

"Why don't you want me to go there?"

"Because no stranger who went there ever returned."

"No? What happened to them?"

Pepita shrugged her pretty shoulders.

"Why, struck with the holiness of the place, they became monks themselves."

Tom laughed heartily.

"That's pretty good, Pepita. What sort of a monk do you think I'd make?"

"You mustn't make fun of such things," she replied with arch severity.

"Why, just think, if I became a monk you could have me for your father confessor. I'd come down every day and call on you."

"You wouldn't be allowed to come out except on certain days, like this, for instance. This is the fast day of their patron saint."

"I guess I don't care to become a monk. I'd sooner stay out in the world and work for my living like most people do."

Pepita laughed.

"Say, what are those big hampers for?" asked Tom, pointing at a couple of great earthen crocks encased in wicker-work, with a cover that fitted snug and a wicker handle, that stood near the corner of the inn.

"Those were brought here from the monastery by two lay brothers."

"What for?"

"To be filled with provisions and wine."

"Oh, I see. Where are these lay brothers now? I haven't seen them since we have been here."

"They went to the village to get something they want."

"They must be strong chaps to be able to carry those hampers filled up with bottles of wine and provender. Why don't they use a burro?"

"They do. It's in our stable."

"Are the hampers loaded now?"

"Yes, all ready and waiting to be taken to the monastery."

At that moment a woman in the inn called to Pepita.

"I'll be back presently," she said.

Tom called his companion's attention to the hampers.

"Let's take a peep and see what's in them?" he suggested.

They went to where the hampers stood, removed the covers and saw a lot of chickens and other things in the food line packed in straw.

"The wine bottles must be at the bottom," said Bob.

"I should have thought they would have stowed them at the top where they would not be so likely to get broken."

They were about to replace the covers when Bob said suddenly:

"Say, Tom, I've a great scheme, if you're game to work it."

"What is your scheme?"

"You'd like to see the inside of the monastery, wouldn't you?"

"I wish I could; but if it's against the regulations of the monks you and I will have to take it out in wishing."

"Not if my scheme works."

"You haven't said what your scheme is."

"It's this: We'll take two-thirds of this stuff out of the hampers and dump it into that rainwater barrel, then we'll get into the hampers ourselves and lie snug. The lay brothers will load the hampers on the burro and we'll have a free ride to the monastery and be carried inside the walls. What do you think of that?"

"You've got a great head, Bob. I wouldn't mind trying the trick on if I believed it would work."

"There's no great harm in making the attempt. If we're caught we can get out of the scrape by making good the damage."

"That would make a hole in our pocketbooks, and we need the money if we're going to travel through Sonora."

"But if we succeed, and I feel it in my bones that we will, think of the rattling adventure we'll have. We'd have the advantage of seeing the inside of a monastery that is closed to all strangers. It would be something to talk about when we get back home."

"We might not be able to get out of the monastery after we got in, not to mention what we might be up against if the monks caught us, as they probably would."

"Why, they're holy men, aren't they? They wouldn't harm a hair of our heads. They might not like our invasion, but I don't suppose they have any secrets they are afraid of leaking out."

"You can't tell what's behind those old gray walls, built a hundred or more years ago. They must have some special reason for keeping strangers at a distance."

"Oh, it's just one of their rules. Well, are you game to do it?"

"If you're willing to take chances I am," replied Tom.

"We're not taking many chances. Most of the monks are away now, and we shall probably have only three or four of the lay brothers to buck against. No doubt we can get

one of them to show us around after we get inside, and then let us out by a side gate before the monks get back."

"All right, old man, heave ahead."

Tom seized a good-sized fowl and threw it into the water-butt.

Bob relieved his hamper of a similar bird.

They worked rapidly, now that they had embarked in the hairbrained adventure, and within ten minutes had emptied enough of the contents of the hampers to permit of their getting inside and putting the covers on.

"It's lucky Pepita has been detained inside, or we never could have worked this dodge," said Tom. "When she comes out presently she'll wonder where we have disappeared to, as she won't see us on the road to either the village or the monastery."

"We'll have the laugh on her when we get back, as you say she told you that we couldn't get in there," said Bob, getting into his hamper.

"She'll think the American boys beat the world for nerve and daring," replied Tom, clambering into the other hamper.

"They certainly do. Hello! There are two chaps coming up the road from the village. They look like lay brothers. Get out of sight and don't make a move."

The boys pulled in their heads, and, adjusting the covers so as to have a little ventilation, they remained as quiet as two bugs in a rug.

As the lay brothers came up Pepita made her appearance at the door.

She was surprised to see that the boys were gone.

She looked up and down the road, but saw no signs of them.

A look of disappointment rested on her pretty face, for she had counted on another talk with Tom Hammond before he and his friend returned to Magdalena on the railway.

"Are the hampers all ready, senorita?" asked one of the lay brothers in an humble tone, as he stepped up.

"They've been ready this hour, good brother," replied the girl respectfully.

"Get the burro, Brother Bruno, and we will proceed on our way," said the lay attache of the monastery. "We are already late. We must hurry in order to get back before the good monks return by the short route."

"Now, by our patron saint, but this hamper is plaguey heavy, Brother Anson," said Brother Bruno, as he and his companion lifted the one in which Tom Hammond was hidden to place it in the sling on the left side of the burro.

"It is, Brother Bruno," admitted the other. "It must carry a load of prime poultry this time, and plenty of wine, for such were the orders we left here to be filled."

"No doubt, brother, no doubt," replied Brother Bruno. "Now the other, and then we're off."

The other hamper was equally as weighty as its companion, and the two men chuckled over the anticipated feast all hands would have off its contents.

Both hampers being well secured on the burro, the lay brothers bowed to the senorita and took up their march for the monastery, both walking beside the animal's head, and talking together in a low tone.

CHAPTER III.

A NOVEL EXPEDIENT.

All things considered, the boys enjoyed their ride from the inn up the mountain side pretty well, as they had put back all the straw to protect the wine bottles under them and make them a soft seat to rest on.

The only unpleasant part of the trip was the heat of the sun, which warmed up the crocks and made their quarters uncomfortably close.

They secured ventilation by holding up the covers an inch or so with their fingers, so that on the whole they got on fairly well.

At length the lay brothers reached the monastery gate with the burro and the hampers.

Brother Bruno drew a horn from his pocket and sounded it.

In a few minutes a wicket in the gate opened and a rough-looking face appeared in the opening.

A moment afterward the big gate swung open and the brothers led the animal into a kind of courtyard, while the man who had opened the gate closed and locked it.

The hampers were deposited before a door at the side of the building, and the burro was taken to a small stable.

The boys simultaneously and cautiously lifted the covers to take a peep at their surroundings.

They found themselves looking into each other's faces, a couple of feet apart.

"We've arrived," said Bob with a grin.

"That's what we have," responded Tom. "We're in the courtyard."

"The coast seems clear. Shall we get out?"

"Not yet. Let the lay brothers carry us inside. You see, we've been deposited near a door. They'll be back presently to move the hampers. If they found them suddenly turned light weight it would arouse their suspicion, naturally. They would examine the inside, and find a lot of nothingness instead of fat chickens and other provender. Then there would be something doing, and we might catch it where the turkey did the axe. Hist! They're coming back. Get out of sight," said Tom.

Brother Bruno unlocked the door, and he and Brother Anson, seizing the hamper that contained Tom, carried it inside to the storeroom of the monastery, where they left it beside several empty hampers.

As soon as their backs were turned Tom raised the cover and watched them go out into a passage.

"This seems to be the storeroom," he thought, looking around. "I think I'll get out of my close quarters and hide behind one of these other hampers."

He suited the action to the thought, and was hardly out of sight when the lay brothers entered with the second hamper, which they put down near the other.

Then they left the room, locking the door after them.

Bob lifted the cover and looked out.

Tom saw him by the light of an old-fashioned lamp which hung from the ceiling.

He decided not to show himself for a few minutes, and see what his companion would do.

Bob stood up in his hamper, reached over and lifted the cover off the other.

"Here, get out, Tom! Are you asleep?" he said.

Tom chuckled from his place of concealment.

As there was no movement in the hamper, Bob looked into it and discovered that Tom was not there.

"Where in thunder is he?" he muttered, springing out on the stone floor.

He looked around the room, but could see nothing of his friend.

"Great jawbones! Maybe—no, that couldn't be. He must be in here somewhere. I'll bet the lobster is hiding from me. Here, Tom, come out, wherever you are. I'm on to your tricks."

Tom saw that the joke was at an end, so he showed himself.

"Funny boy!" growled Bob. "Thought you'd scare me, did you? Thought I'd believe I was in here all alone. Huh! I wasn't born yesterday. Now, what are we to do first? Get out of here, I suppose. This is only the storeroom, and there is nothing to see here that's interesting."

"Come on, then," said Tom. "Hold on a moment. What's that on yonder shelf?"

They went to the shelf and found a pair of loaded revolvers.

"What do monks need revolvers for?" said Bob in some surprise.

"If you'll tell me I'll tell you," replied Tom. "I think we'd better take them. As we're in this place without authority, we might be roughly handled by the monks when they discover us, as I'm afraid they are bound to, unless we're able to protect ourselves."

"A good idea," said Bob. "You take one and I'll take the other. We can leave them at the inn when we get back, to be returned with our compliments."

Accordingly the boys each thrust a revolver into their pockets and then turned to the door.

They were staggered when they found it locked.

"We're locked in!" said Tom, with a blank look.

"Good gracious!" replied Bob. "Is that so? What are we going to do now?"

"What can we do until somebody comes and lets us out?"

"This is a dickens of a note. We'll be bundled out of the monastery and won't be able to see a thing after all the trouble we've taken to get in."

"Can't be helped. It is simply hard luck."

"Maybe there's another way of getting out."

"I doubt it."

"Let's see, at any rate."

They examined the walls, but couldn't find any other means of entrance or exit.

"We're up against it, all right," said Bob, as they stood in a corner opposite the door. "Here we'll have to stay until—what's that?"

His foot had come into contact with an obstruction which, on examination, proved to be the iron ring at one end of a trap-door.

"A trap-door. This must lead somewhere," said Tom, examining it.

"Of course it leads somewhere. Maybe to some dungeon cell."

"What would monks want a dungeon cell for?"

"Maybe it was used a long time ago, when the place was first built, to punish some monk who broke his vows and went wrong. Lots of queer things were done in the olden times, before people were as civilized as they are now."

"Let's see where it leads to," said Tom, stooping and seizing the ring.

The trap yielded readily to a pull, opening up on a pair of hinges.

Flashing a match down the hole, they saw a flight of narrow, circular stone steps leading down into pitch darkness.

The idea of penetrating that place did not strike either Tom or Bob as inviting.

"Puts me in mind of stories I've read about the underground passages in the old medieval castles on the Rhine and elsewhere," said Bob.

"It looks rather cobwebby and mysterious down there, doesn't it?" responded his companion.

"I should remark. And a strong, dank smell comes out of it. I don't know that I've got the nerve to tackle it."

"Not if I go first?"

"Oh, if you go down I shan't hold back."

"How is your match safe?"

"Full."

"So is mine, so come on. Hold on, I'll go down a bit and you let the trap down. I want to see if we can push it up easily from underneath."

The experiment was tried, and Tom found that he could open the trap from beneath without any trouble.

That fact being settled, they started down the stone steps, Bob pulling the trap down over his head.

Tom counted fifty steps as he advanced, striking a fresh match when the previous one went out, and then he faced a tunnel-like passage.

They advanced along the passage for perhaps a dozen feet, when they came to a grated door.

"I wonder where this leads to?" said Bob.

The door was locked, but a huge iron key projected from the keyhole.

Tom turned it and pulled the door toward him.

The odor that reached their noses was decidedly unpleasant.

"Shut the door and let's sneak," said Bob. "Heavens! That smell is enough to knock a horse down."

Tom was about to do so in a hurry when suddenly a hollow groan struck upon their ears.

It clearly came from the room, and sounded most unearthly.

"That settles it! Me for the storeroom as fast as I can reach it," said Bob.

"Hold on, Bob. There's some one in here who seems to be in a bad way," said Tom, whose nerve held out under the trying circumstances. "Don't run away. Let's investigate." gate.

He struck another match as he spoke and flashed it into the small cell.

The sight they saw made them start back aghast.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECRET OF CLAIM NO. 7.

Upon a moldy bed of straw lay the ghastly wreck of what had once been a stalwart man,

To the eye he was a mere living skeleton.

His eyes, sunk deeply in their sockets, burned like live coals.

His garments were mere tattered remnants of the clothes he had once worn.

"Great Scott!" cried Tom. "This is awful!"

Bob tried to say something, but his tongue refused to wag.

As Tom struck a third match he saw a lantern standing near the door.

Picking it up, he saw that there was a piece of candle in it, and he eagerly jumped at the chance to secure a steady illumination.

The unfortunate specimen of humanity looked with surprise on their features and forms revealed by the light.

"Who—are—you?" he asked in hollow tones.

He spoke in the English language.

"Two American boys," replied Tom. "Who are you, and how came you here and in this horrible state?"

"How—came—you—here?" he replied, ignoring the boy's questions.

"Oh, we just dropped into this old monastery to look around," answered Tom.

"The bandits—where—are—they?"

"Bandits!" exclaimed Tom. "What bandits? I don't know of any."

The—villains—who—pretend—to—be—monks."

"You don't mean the Black Brotherhood?" cried Tom, looking at Bob in some consternation.

"Yes. They—are—not—monks—but—a—gang—of—bandits. I am—their—victim. For—months—I—know—not—how—many—perhaps—years—they—have—kept—me—here—a—prisoner."

"Why did they do this?"

"To—learn—the—secret—of—Claim—Seven."

The secret of Claim Seven!"

"Yes."

"What is Claim Seven?"

"The—richest—mine—in—these—mountains."

"Gee! Is that so?"

The man uttered a hollow groan.

"Tom, we'll have to get out of this den of thieves, which we thought was the monastery of an order known as the Black Brotherhood, and get help to save this poor old man," said Bob.

"It—is—too—late—to—save—me," said the man. "I have—been—dying—for—a—long—time—and—an—hour—or—two—will—finish—me. You—boys—shall—be—my—heirs. To—you—I—will—give—the—secret—of—Claim—Seven. It—will—make—you—rich—for—there—is—a—fortune—in—gold—in—it. Mark—you—the—third—stone—from—the—bottom—in—yonder—corner? Remove—it."

"Hold the lantern, Bob, and I will see whether this is a pipe dream or not," said Tom.

He laid hold of the stone and found no trouble in pulling it out.

"Shove the lantern this way," he said.

The light revealed a small, thin memorandum book underneath where the stone had rested.

"Is this what you mean?" asked Tom, holding it up before the man.

"Yes. Guard—it—well—and—read—what—is—written—in—it," he answered, with increasing difficulty.

Tom shoved it into his pocket.

"—Now—go—and—may—heaven—preserve—you—both," said the man.

"But we can't leave you in this hole," said Tom.

"Go—go," said the man eagerly. "I will—be—dead—before—ah!"

His head rolled to one side, and his jaw dropped.

"He is dead," cried Bob. "He went like the snuffing out of a candle."

"Thank goodness he is out of his misery! And now we had better get out of this place as soon as we can. Heavens! To think we're in a nest of bandits instead of a monastery of pious monks. No wonder slight-seeing strangers are not admitted to this place, unless, perhaps, they are known to have money or jewelry enough about them to tempt the rascals to put them out of the way. As we have learned the secret of the place, we may be lucky if we escape with our lives."

"Don't mention it! You give me the shivers! This is the time we have put our feet into it. It's lucky we found those revolvers. We will be able to defend ourselves if driven into a corner," said Bob.

"Well, we'll lock the door and take the key away. It will be a fitting tomb for the poor chap, and the rascals when

they come down here to visit him again won't be able to get at his bones," said Tom, taking the lantern.

With the lantern to light the way their return to the storeroom was rapid, and glad enough they were to get back.

Tom closed the trap and blew out the light of the lantern.

"Those bogus lay brothers haven't come back to get the contents of the hampers yet," said Bob, looking into one of them, and observing that the straw had not been disturbed. "How surprised they'll be when they find them three-quarters empty."

"They'll be sure to suspect the cause, and knowing that this room has been locked since they left the hampers they'll hunt around in here till they find us," replied Tom. "Now, I've an idea to throw them off the scent."

"What is it?"

"We'll take the wine bottles out of the hampers and then fill them up with all the old rubbish we can find in this place. That ought to make the hampers as weighty as when they arrived here, and the lay brothers will not suspect that they brought two curious American boys into this alleged monastery."

They packed the straw nicely in at the top, just as they had originally found it at the inn before they conceived their daring project of entering the monastery.

"I'm afraid Pepita's father is the one who will get in trouble over the matter."

At that moment they heard the rattle of a key in the lock of the door, and they hastened to conceal themselves.

CHAPTER V.

EXPLORING THE MONASTERY.

The door opened and two men, who appeared to be connected with the culinary department of the monastery, entered the storeroom.

They went directly to one of the hampers, took off the cover, and began pulling out the straw.

After the straw was out one of the men reached in and drew out a canvas-covered ham which the boys had found hanging from a nail and used to help fill the hamper.

He looked at it in surprise and uttered an ejaculation in Spanish.

"Bruno and Anson were not told to get smoked ham," he said.

"Well, never mind, comrade, as long as they brought plenty of good fowl we will forgive them the ham," replied the other, reaching down and fishing out, instead of the chicken he expected, a grindstone the boys had taken from a shelf.

"El Demonio! What is this?" cried the astonished man.

"A grindstone!" ejaculated his amazed companion. "What is it doing in this hamper?"

"Bruno and Anson will have to answer for this. It is one of their jokes, no doubt."

The speaker reached down into the hamper again.

This time he fished up a small bag with three empty bottles in it.

"Caramba! What is the meaning of this?"

"Por Dios! If this is a joke it is a poor one," said his companion.

"Let us look into the other."

They did, and their astonishment and rage was great on discovering that it, too, was full of a miscellaneous collection of odds and ends, most of which they recognized as belonging to the storeroom.

They swore like troopers and vowed that Bruno and Anson should pay dearly for the trick.

"It is growing late, and this nonsense will delay dinner. You, comrade, hunt up either Bruno or Anson and bring him here. In the meantime I will look around to see where the right contents of the hampers are hidden," said the chap who seemed to be the head cook, and whose name was Antonio.

His companion hurried away and Antonio began nosing around.

The boys saw that they were sure to be discovered, so they resolved to take the bull by the horns before the man's associate returned with Bruno or Anson.

As Antonio came within a foot or two of them, Tom rose up suddenly and struck him a blow on the head with the butt of the revolver he carried.

The bandit cook fell without a cry and lay like a log on the floor.

"Dump him into one of these empty hampers," said Tom, "and then we'll be off."

This was speedily accomplished, and the boys glided out of the storeroom into a long passage.

"Say, Tom, let us hide in this niche and wait for those chaps to enter the storeroom. As soon as they are in we'll close the door on them and lock them in. That will reduce the enemy by two more," said Bob.

Tom thought the idea a good one, so they took refuge in the niche and waited.

Presently they heard footsteps echoing in the distance, a door opened and then slammed, and voices of two men in angry conversation reached their ears.

The men entered the passage, went toward the open door of the storeroom and walked in.

Tom immediately slipped off his shoes and ran over to the door.

Antonio's associate was showing the dumbfounded Bruno the various articles that he and the head cook had pulled out of the two hampers brought from the inn, and jabbering out his opinion of what he considered a mighty poor practical joke.

Tom took advantage of their backs being turned to shut and lock the door on them.

Then removing the key, he rejoined Bob and put on his shoes.

"Which way shall we go?" asked Bob.

"Follow me," replied Tom.

He led off down the passage, which terminated in a wide corridor.

There were doors at each end of the corridor.

The boys went to one of these doors.

Opening it cautiously a little way, Tom looked out on the courtyard.

He shut it quickly, for he had seen half a dozen hard-looking chaps attired in monkish habits, but with the cowls thrown back on their shoulders, within a couple of yards of the door.

The rays of the declining sun lighted up their grizzled countenances, and showed villainy written on every line.

Tom dragged Bob away toward the other end of the corridor, telling him what he had seen.

The door here was locked, but as the key was in it the boys had no difficulty in letting themselves out on a wide platform surrounded by a low, thick wall.

Looking over the wall, they perceived that there was no escape in this direction, for below them was a deep, rocky ravine that ran into the depths of the range, with never a foothold for a human being to make his way down.

Above them soared the three stories of the rear wall of the monastery, with a score or more of narrow windows overlooking the landscape.

"Come, we will go inside again and see if luck will befriend us."

There were doors right and left off the corridor.

Tom opened the first on the right and saw it was the refectory or dining-room of the monastery.

So far they had been very fortunate in not running across any of the rascals who had converted this religious establishment to their own sacrilegious uses.

Seeing a narrow door on either side, Tom led the way toward them.

The first he tried was locked and the key was missing, the other one yielded to his touch.

They passed into a small ante-chamber whence a spiral staircase of stone led upward.

"Come on, Bob, we might as well see where this leads to," said Tom, running up the steps.

The flight ended at a narrow landing facing a door.

The door was not locked, and they entered a room, furnished with a couch, a rude chair, and a half dozen pegs driven into the wall.

From these pegs hung various articles of coarse clothing, including a Panama straw, a soft cowboy hat, and a sombrero.

On the floor was a pair of long boots with spurs attached to the heels, a heavy Mexican saddle, from the holsters of which protruded the butts of two heavy revolvers.

"Here is more armament," said Bob. "We'd better take these shooters. We can't be too well armed in this den of iniquity."

Tom agreed with him, and they took possession of the weapons.

They stepped to the narrow window that afforded light to the room, and looked out.

The view they obtained was a wild and romantic one, with the peaks of the Sierra de Antunez glowing in the last rays of the sinking sun.

"What a building for different kinds of passages," remarked Bob.

"It might be better to go up to the next story and hide there. Maybe that is not occupied by the bandits."

"Go ahead, then, and I'll follow."

So up they went to the landing above.

Here they found another corridor running the length of the building, with several doors leading off of it.

Having nothing better to engage their attention, and not believing there was any one at all on this floor, the boys proceeded to inspect the rooms.

At the end of the corridor they came to a locked door.

The key was in the lock, however, so Tom turned it and walked inside, followed by Bob.

They stopped with exclamations of surprise.

The room was occupied by a lovely-looking girl, who sat beside the narrow window with her hands clasped in her lap, and her tear-dimmed eyes watching the tip of the sun's yellow disc as it slowly sank out of sight in the far-off horizon.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TWO PRISONERS.

The fair occupant of the room, who was evidently a prisoner, turned her head with an exclamation.

As her gaze rested on the boys the look of fear in her eyes changed to one of surprise.

She looked like an American, so Tom, who was in the lead, addressed her in English as he advanced.

"Don't be frightened, miss. You appear to be a prisoner here, so you can count on us as friends," he said.

"Did you learn that I and my father were prisoners in the hands of the dreadful men who live in this monastery, and have come to save us?" she asked eagerly.

"No, we have discovered your presence here by accident. You say that your father is a prisoner, too? In one of the rooms on this floor?"

"In the next room. We are being held for a ransom, and threatened with death if it is not sent. How comes it you are here and not prisoners?" she asked, with a doubtful look in her eyes. "Are the robbers away?"

"No; I wish they were. It would not then be a difficult matter for us to make our escape."

"Ah! You have been prisoners and managed to get out of the place in which you were confined—is that it?"

"No, that isn't it. We simply made fools of ourselves and came voluntarily into this bandit nest, thinking it was occupied by the monks of the Black Brotherhood."

"That is how we were taken prisoners. We heard a great deal about this monastery during our tour of this country, and as I was anxious to see such an old religious building, my father decided to gratify my curiosity, so we came to Sonora from Chihuahua, and three days ago we rode out here on horseback from Magdalena."

"That is the town where we heard about this monastery," said Sam. "The landlord of the inn where we stopped last night said so much about it that we made up our minds to come out here this morning. We did so. We stopped to rest at the inn on this side of the village. There the daughter of the landlord told us we must not come here, as strangers were never admitted. In fact, she made a remark that ought to have impressed me, and that was that nobody who ventured to visit this place ever returned from it. I asked her why, and she replied that, struck by the holiness of the monastery, they became monks themselves."

Tom then went on to recount how they had secured admission to the place.

"That was a tom-fool trick, and we are getting paid up for it," he said. "However, if our coming here proves the means of restoring you and your father to freedom, it won't be such a bad trick, after all."

"How can you do that?" she asked anxiously.

"That has to be considered. We came up to this floor to hide until it was dark, and then we intended to make a dash to get outside the wall. I suppose we shall carry

that programme out, only we will take you and your father with us."

"You haven't told me your name," she said, after a short pause.

"My name is Tom Hammond, and this is my friend, Bob Gillette. What is your name, miss?"

"Dora Ardsley. My father is Henry Ardsley, president of the Western National Bank of St. Louis."

"You say he is a prisoner in the next room?"

"Yes, and he must be dreadfully worried about me."

"Bob, go and see if you can get into the next room. If you can, bring Mr. Ardsley in here, and we will consider a plan for our joint escape."

Bob left the room and returned in a few minutes with the girl's father.

Dora rushed into his arms with a cry of joy.

"You'd better go down the corridor and stand watch, Bob, so that we may not be surprised by the bandits. While you are on guard we will arrange some plan for making our escape," said Tom.

Bob left the room, and then Tom gave Mr. Ardsley a rapid outline of the brief trip that he and his companion had paid to Mexico, and the serious adventure which had been the outcome of it.

"Here, take this revolver. One will probably be as much as I can use to advantage. Can you shoot, Miss Ardsley?"

"I shall be willing to try in my own defense," she replied with a smile.

"Then take this weapon, and when you shoot, shoot to hit. I will get one of my companion's revolvers. Thus the four of us will be in a position to make things interesting for the rascals," said Tom.

Tom then said that the best plan would be to wait till the bandits were in the eating-room at their dinner, and then they might count on the coast being fairly clear for them to make a break for the courtyard and try to escape by the main gate before the rascals could cut them off.

"That is an excellent plan, provided we can secure the key to open the gate," replied Mr. Ardsley. "If we fail to do that we won't be able to get away unless we can find means of scaling the wall in a hurry."

"I counted on finding the key in the lock of the gate," said Tom.

"Then you have figured wrong, for there seems to be a man who has charge of the opening and closing of the gate. He probably carries the key."

While they were speaking they heard a great racket in the courtyard, in which were mingled the cries of a man.

It was now nearly dark, and the cause of the tumult could not be made out through the small window that afforded light and air to the room.

Somebody, however, appeared to be getting scolded, and Tom and Bob surmised it was one of the two men whose errand to the inn and village had been to fetch the necessary supplies.

The row stopped after a few minutes, but the voices of many of the men could be heard in angry tones.

"By the way, do they feed you regularly?" said Tom to Mr. Ardsley.

"Yes, they have treated us fairly well as far as food goes," answered the gentleman.

"Then it is probable that one or two of them may be up here soon with your evening meal," said the boy. "In order to avoid precipitating trouble, I think you had better return to your room, Mr. Ardsley. We will turn the key on you both as we found you, and conceal ourselves close by. After the men have left you we will unlock your doors again."

"I agree that that is a prudent suggestion," replied the banker.

"Seeing that there is likely to be trouble in getting out by the gate, I think we'll have to postpone our departure until the bandits have turned in for the night," said Tom.

"They don't go to bed till all hours," said Mr. Ardsley. "I have heard them shouting and singing somewhere on the ground floor long after midnight."

"Well, get into your room now. Bob and I will try to find an avenue of escape. You mustn't be impatient, either of you, if you don't hear from us for some time."

The banker kissed his daughter tenderly and followed the boys out into the corridor.

Tom locked them both in, leaving the keys in the locks as he had found them, then the boys went to the landing

at the head of the stairs to listen for the expected coming of a bandit or two with the night meal for the prisoners.

CHAPTER VII.

A DASH FOR FREEDOM.

Half an hour passed, during which Tom and Bob sat on the top step and conversed in whispers, and then steps were heard coming up the stairs from the ground floor.

"Hist! I think some one is coming up here," said Tom.

Accordingly the boys retired to the room opposite the one occupied by Dora Ardsley.

As it was quite dark now, they left the door ajar so they could look out.

They heard the steps ascending the top flight, and soon saw the faint flash of a light.

The light grew brighter as the men approached that end of the corridor.

At length the men came into view.

The one in advance was a stalwart, sunburned chap with a dark mustache and a rather wicked look.

He carried a lamp in one hand and a small tray of food balanced in the other.

He didn't look at all like a Mexican or Spaniard, but rather greatly resembled one of the tough characters of the mining districts of our wild and woolly West.

His companion, a man with many of his own characteristics, appeared to be an American, too.

He also carried a lamp and a tray of food.

The man with the mustache entered Dora's room and the other went into the room occupied by her father.

They shut the doors after them, and so the boys had no means of knowing what they said to the prisoners.

The man who entered Mr. Ardsley's quarters soon came out without the tray or the lamp, and, after locking the door, went downstairs.

The other remained so long in Dora's room that Tom grew impatient.

Suddenly a shrill scream from Dora awakened the echoes of the night.

That was more than Tom could stand.

He rushed across the corridor, threw open the door, and saw the girl struggling in the rascal's embrace.

He dashed to her assistance.

The scoundrel turned at the sound of his steps and saw him.

With an ejaculation of surprise he released Dora and turned to confront the boy.

"Who in thunder are you?" he cried in English. "And how did you get here?"

"No matter how I got here, or who I am, you are my prisoner," replied Tom, leveling his revolver at him.

"Your prisoner!" answered the ruffian, with a sneering laugh, not at all intimidated by the pointed weapon. "I rather guess you're mine."

With that he made a spring at Tom and grabbed the wrist that held the revolver.

Tom did not try to shoot, as he didn't care to raise an alarm.

He struck out with his left fist and landed on the rascal's face.

With a string of imprecations he seized the boy with his other arm, and Tom would have had little show with the stalwart scoundrel had not Bob, who was watching at the door, rushed in and dealt the man a stunning blow on the head with the butt of his weapon.

The ruffian dropped senseless on the floor.

"That settles his hash," said Bob.

"For the time being," said Tom, "we must gag and bind him so that he won't be able to raise an alarm when he recovers his senses."

He took the blanket off the couch that had been provided for Dora to sleep on, tore a portion of it into strips and tied the man hand and foot.

Then he gagged him with another strip.

"Take the tray into the room across the corridor, Bob," he said. "I'll follow with the lamp. Come, Miss Ardsley."

He locked the rascal in and removed the key.

"Better eat your supper now," he said to the girl. "I see you haven't touched it. I suppose the rascal annoyed you with his attentions."

"He tried to make love to me," she replied, with flushed face. "I begged him to go away. He said he would if I would kiss him. Of course I wouldn't do anything of the kind. Then he said he would kiss me himself. He grabbed me, I screamed, and then you came in and saved me. I am very grateful to you for doing so," and she favored Tom with a look that set his blood tingling, for she was a very pretty and winsome girl.

"It is fortunate we were at hand to be of assistance to you. Go and let Mr. Ardsley out of his room, Bob."

His companion did so, and the banker joined them.

He was quite nervous about his daughter, for he had heard her scream, but was somewhat reassured when he heard Tom's voice addressing the bandit.

Dora was too nervous and excited to eat anything, so, rather than let the food go to waste, Tom and Bob, who were pretty hungry themselves, cleaned the plates between them.

Telling Mr. Ardsley and his daughter to remain in the room, Tom and Bob adjourned to the head of the stairs, where they took up their position once more to keep watch so that none of the bandits could come on them or their new acquaintances unawares.

An hour passed, and nobody came upstairs.

A sound of revelry came up from the ground floor, and the boys concluded that the bandits were carousing in the room where the altar was.

"This would be a good chance for us to slip out if they are all in that room," said Tom; "but they may be lounging around the main corridor as well, in which case they would be bound to see us as we made our exit through the door at the foot of the stairs."

"If it wasn't that we had the young lady to protect I would be game for taking the chances," replied Bob.

"I would chance it anyway, if I thought we could get through the gate."

"Hadn't we better go down and see how the land lies?" suggested Bob fifteen minutes later.

"Yes, I guess we may venture," replied Tom.

They removed their shoes and slipped down the dark stairway like two shadows.

The main corridor was deserted, all the bandits being in the carousing room, talking and singing in a loud key.

"The coast is clear. Go up, Bob, and fetch Mr. Ardsley and his daughter down and we'll get out into the courtyard. Tell the old gentleman to remove his shoes and carry his daughter in his arms," said Tom.

Bob disappeared upstairs.

While he was away Tom slipped over to the door and tried it.

It was not locked.

He returned to the staircase and waited impatiently for Bob and the others to appear, which they did inside of ten minutes.

As the corridor still remained untenanted, Tom and Bob, with drawn revolvers, walked to the door, followed by the banker and Dora.

They passed out into the open air and closed the door behind them.

Then they started for the wall.

It was not a dark night, as the sky was brilliant with stars, though there was no moon.

Tom judged it best not to go toward the gate, at least direct, lest they be observed by some bandit who might be on the watch.

They reached the wall without an alarm being given.

It was a pretty tall and thick one, but there were many places where the smaller stones had fallen out, and these interstices offered a foothold for an expert climber.

The boys, after surveying it, did not doubt that they could get over it if not interfered with, but the question was how to get the girl up to the top.

Finally Tom told Bob to climb up as an experiment.

In five minutes he was astride of the wall.

Then Tom told Mr. Ardsley that they must try and push Dora up high enough for Bob to reach her hands, when it would be possible, he judged, with his companion's assistance, for her to scramble up the rest of the way.

It was a new and rather embarrassing experience for the girl to undertake, but as it seemed to be the only way of escape she consented to try it.

So Tom and the banker lifted her up by degrees, telling

her to make use of the holes in the walls to place her boots and her fingers.

Bob, reaching down as far as he could and still maintain a firm hold on the wall, finally caught her hands and raised her up by degrees until he got her on top.

Mr. Ardsley followed, and Bob aided him, too.

With only the agile Tom to follow, their success seemed assured.

At that thrilling moment one of the bandits, the door tender, in fact, appeared on the scene and spied them.

He yanked out his revolver and fired a shot at them, the bullet whistling by Bob's head, causing him to duck his head involuntarily.

"Quick, Tom! Up with you, or you'll be nabbed!" cried Bob, as the man came running toward them, shooting as he ran.

Fortunately his rapid movements did not improve his aim, and a shot from the banker's weapon winged him, more by good luck than otherwise.

As Tom came scrambling up as fast as he could, Bob and Mr. Ardsley both gave him a hand, and he was soon on the top of the wall.

"Drop over on the other side, Mr. Ardsley, and catch your daughter as we lower her to you, then cut down that road toward the inn as fast as you can go. We'll try and keep these rascals at bay long enough to give you a good start."

The banker didn't lose a moment in getting down, and his daughter was soon in his arms.

As they started off down the road on a run the bandits came pouring out of the building.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN A TRAP AND OUT.

They saw the figures of the boys astride of the wall, and at first they had an idea they were part of the gang.

The only prisoners they had, barring the poor old wreck that lay dead in his underground vault, were the banker and his daughter, whom they were holding for ransom, and they considered them safely caged on the top floor of the monastery.

Therefore they could not understand that any one was trying to get away over the wall, but their impression was that their identity had leaked out, and that the Mexican authorities were at their gate with a demand for their surrender.

This idea was dissipated by the wounded gateman, who ran up and told them that a man and a girl, resembling their prisoners, assisted by two strange boys, were making their escape over the wall.

This delay on their part gave the banker and his daughter time to get out of sight and secure a good start for the inn.

As soon as Tom saw they had disappeared in the distance he said:

"Now we'll skip, Bob, but instead of following our new friends, and thus drawing the bandits in their direction, we'll start up the mountain. The bandits will follow us, and as we're pretty active we ought to be able to give them the slip, and hide somewhere till daylight, when we can make for Magdalena by another route, where we will doubtless meet Mr. Ardsley and his daughter at the inn."

As the boys started to go down on the other side of the wall, the bandits gave a shout and rushed for the gate, discharging several shots at the boys.

Tom and Bob heard the whistle of the bullets as they ducked over the wall and dropped to the ground.

"If it were only a dark night now, we'd be all right," said Bob, as they darted off up the mountain.

"But it happens that it isn't," replied Tom. "However, there's no moon, and that's some advantage."

It was light enough for the bandits to see them when they poured out of the gate, and the rascals followed as hard as they could go, firing their weapons on the chance of hitting the fugitives.

The chance, however, was slight, and so the race continued over ground that gave the rascals the advantage because they were familiar with it, while the boys were not.

The boys, being fleet of foot and full of animal spirits, did not anticipate being overhauled but they soon had rea-

son to alter their opinion, as the dozen or more scoundrels dogged them with a persistency that showed they did not mean to let them escape if they could help it.

If they, and the two prisoners whom the rascals believed were with them got away, their secret would be out, and the monastery would no longer be the safe hiding-place for them it had been for several years past.

The leader of the band was not with them, because he was bound and gagged in the room on the third floor of the monastery where Tom had left him locked in.

Tom did not know it was the redoubtable head of the band whom he, with Bob's help, had overthrown, nor did the ruffians themselves know that their captain was in trouble.

He was a Western desperado, named Dave Hamlin, who had drifted to Mexico some years before, because his crimes had made his old stamping grounds too hot for him.

Two companions, as bad as himself, had followed him, and they had collected a crowd of villainous Mexicans around them, and the whole outfit, under Hamlin's leadership, terrorized northern Mexico for a hundred miles around, and defied all efforts of the government to exterminate them.

During a raid into Sonora, Hamlin conceived what he and his companions considered a brilliant idea.

That was to take possession of the monastery of the Black Brotherhood and pose as the monks, whose faces were always hidden under their cowls when they appeared in public.

To carry this plan out it was, of course, necessary to get rid of the monks.

Hamlin found an easy and effectual way of doing this.

There were several abandoned mines in the Sierra de Antunez Range.

After surprising the religious men one day in their monastery and making them prisoners, he marched them into a particularly inaccessible part of the mountains and shut them up in the mine which had its outlet there.

He took care, however, to strip them of their coarse distinctive black outer garments, for it was necessary, in order to keep up appearances, to maintain the monkish attire when occasion called for it.

Thenceforth the band of rascals always appeared in the clerical garb of the Black Brotherhood, except when engaged in their lawless business.

Thus their presence in the monastery on the slope of the Sierra de Antunez Mountains was never suspected.

When pursued, as they often were, by the Mexican police, they retreated to their sanctuary, and so disappeared as if by magic from the officers of justice, who hunted the range over and over again for their retreat without success.

It was from the clutches of a dozen at least of this gang that Tom and Bob fled farther and further into the mountains that eventful night, and only that luck befriended them at a timely moment the boys would have been captured, and capture, under the circumstances, would have meant death, swift and certain.

"I'm afraid our name is Mud," said Tom, as he and his companion, exhausted by the hard flight they had been put to, looked around for some place in which to make a desperate stand against the ruffians who were closing in around them on almost every side.

The round tip of the full moon was just rising in the distance, and its silvery rays would presently reveal their whereabouts to the vengeful rascals who had cornered them in a kind of cul de sac, or quarry-like indentation in the range, from which there appeared to be no outlet.

"Well, we've got six shots apiece with which to defend ourselves. If we can't escape some of them will never live to gloat over our capture," said Bob, with a tense ring in his tones. "I shall fight to the last gasp."

"That's all we can do, Bob, old chap. There's no telling what our fate might be if we were taken alive. They might stick us down in that dungeon where we saw the old man die and abandon us to starvation as they did him. Death by a bullet is far preferable to such an end as that," replied Tom.

"I should say so."

"And that reminds me of the old man's book containing the secret of Claim Seven. He gave up his life sooner than reveal the location of the mine, probably guessing that they would put him out of the way, anyhow. He told me with his last breath to guard it well, meaning I must not let it fall into the hands of those villains. Well, I must hide it in

some fissure of these rocks so it will not be found on me when the end has come."

As there was no time to be lost, Tom set about doing it while Bob kept watch for the appearance of the bandits.

Looking around for a suitable receptacle in which to place the book where it would defy discovery even in broad daylight, Tom saw a small hole in the face of the rock above his head.

He stepped on a smooth, round stone in order to reach it.

His weight caused the stone to slip and roll from under him.

Losing his balance unexpectedly, he fell sideways into a clump of bushes, through which he shot with a smothered cry like a pantomime imp through a stage trap, landing on a bunch of some soft material a dozen or more feet underground, and in the midst of intense darkness.

Bob saw his plunge, and rushed over to the bushes when his companion failed to scramble to his feet.

The bushes had closed in over Tom's head, concealing the hole completely, and so Bob was astonished to see no sign of him.

"My, gracious! Where did Tom vanish to?" he said to himself. "He fell right into these bushes, and yet he ain't here at all. Tom, Tom! Where are you?"

No reply came to his low hail.

"He must have been stunned, and yet if he was I should see him. I don't see any hole where he could have fallen in. This is the most myste——"

He took another step forward as he spoke.

The bushes yielded under his weight, as they had under Tom, and down he sank below the surface like a shot, fetching up alongside his missing companion.

At the very moment he disappeared several of the bandits appeared at the opening of the cul de sac, and two or three more came out on the ridge which formed its sides and back.

The moon, rising higher, threw a broad shaft of light into it, illuminating the greater part of it.

"We've got 'em trapped at last!" cried a smooth-faced Mexican, rushing forward with his cocked revolver, expecting to see the boys, as well as their late prisoners, crouching down somewhere in the semi-circular spot.

His companions pressed eagerly forward behind him, while those above looked down to see the finale of the long chase.

To the surprise and disappointment of the rascals there was no sign of their quarry anywhere.

"Caramba! They did not come in here, after all, but gave us the slip somewhere outside!" grunted the Mexican who led the pursuit.

"Por Dios! Did I not see them come in here?" growled one of his companions.

"If you did, they would be here."

"They may be hidin' behind them bushes."

Three of the ruffians raised their revolvers and fired into the patch of bushes, and then dashed forward, stopping on the edge and parting the shubbery with their arms.

Had they stepped into the midst of it they would have been treated to the same surprise experienced by Tom and Bob; but they did not, for they could see that the bushes did not shelter those they were in search of.

After a hurried consultation the bandits left the place, and, dividing into two parties, hurried off up the mountains in two directions.

CHAPTER IX.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A DEAD MAN.

"Oh, heavens! Where am I at?" ejaculated Bob, when he landed on the yielding mass of material at the bottom of the hole.

"Hello, Bob! I see you have joined me," replied a voice at his elbow.

"Is that you, Tom?"

"Who else? Didn't you see me vanish through the bushes, and haven't you followed me?"

"I have for fair, but I didn't do it of my own accord. I stepped into that hole above while looking to see where you had disappeared to and came down so and that almost took my breath away."

"Hist! I hear those rascals up there. They are looking for us."

They groped their way a few yards from the bottom of the hole, and then stopped, for in the darkness they feared they might tumble into some pit.

After waiting in some trepidation for one of the bandits to come shooting down into that pit of darkness in the same way they had come, and no such awkward and unwelcome intrusion happening, they began to breathe easier.

"I guess we're not going to have a visitor, after all," said Tom.

"I hope you don't feel disappointed," growled Bob.

"Not in the least. This is an instance where two are company and three or more an unpleasant crowd. I guess it's safe to strike a match and see where we are and how we're going to get out when we think it time to make the attempt."

Tom fished a match out of the little safe he always carried around with him, for though he didn't have much use for them himself, somebody always was asking him for a match to light a pipe or a cigar, and he liked to be accommodating.

Under the present circumstances a safe full of matches came in mighty handy.

Tom struck one, and when the light flashed up the boy saw that they were in a hole about a dozen feet square, one side of which was solid rock, while the others were a mixture of rock and dirt.

Nearly in the center of this excavation they saw the dark hole through which they had made their involuntary descent.

In the solid rock was another hole, which looked like the mouth of a tunnel.

That they were not the only persons who had been in that was evident from the presence of a lantern with a piece of candle in it.

"A lantern!" cried Bob. "We're in luck."

Tom thought so, too, for he lost no time in lighting it.

The dull gleam it shed made the place more cheerful, though it showed them the almost utter impossibility of returning to the surface by the route of the hole.

"How are we going to make our escape from this hole?" asked Bob with a glum look. "This is almost as bad as being confined in that monastery vault."

"The person who brought this lantern here must have got out, or else his dead body would be in evidence. I judge that tunnel yonder must lead somewhere."

"I should imagine it led into the mountain range, and I don't think we are likely to escape that way. The man who brought the lantern was probably lowered down and hauled up again by companions on the outside."

"Why should he leave the lantern behind him in that case?"

"I'm not a fortune teller, so I can't answer your conundrum."

The boys tried to think of some way by which they could return to the cul de sac above via the perpendicular hole, but they couldn't figure it out.

"I'm afraid this is our finish," said Bob gloomily.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Tom with a cheerfulness that he did not actually feel. "We were lucky enough to get out of that bandit nest with our scalps, and help Mr. Ardsley and his daughter to freedom as well, why should our luck go back on us now that we've given our pursuers the slip?"

"People can't be lucky all the time."

"Well, I don't feel as if I was going to turn up my toes yet a while, and I take that as a favorable omen."

"What are you going to do?"

"Try the tunnel route and see where it will lead us to—that is, after we get rested. I'm pretty much fagged out by that chase up the mountains, and I should think you would be, too."

"You can bet your life I am."

"Sitting just as cheap to sit down as to stand. Here goes," and Tom threw himself at full length on the ground.

Bob did likewise, with the lamp between them.

"While you're doing nothing I'm going to take a peep at the dead man's book and see what the secret of Claim Seven amounts to," said Tom, pulling the memorandum book out of his pocket.

Draining the lantern to him, and raising himself on one elbow, Tom opened the book.

"The old man was a pretty fair writer," he said. "I

wonder if he put down what's in this book while he was a prisoner in that vault? He must have had a light to write by."

"We found a lantern in his cell."

"I suppose he filled this book up just to keep his mind occupied," said Tom, running the numbered leaves over with his fingers.

"Very likely. Let's hear what he says about this secret mining claim, though it isn't likely to do us any good from the way things look at this moment."

"It would be a fine thing if, after we got out of here, we discovered a rich gold mine. We'd be made for life."

"I'd give my chances of it to be back in Magdalena in the same bunk I occupied last night."

"Perhaps I would, too, if I told the truth. However, I'll read you a bit of this. What do you suppose he called it?"

"The secret of Claim Seven."

"No, the title is rather creepy. He called it the 'Autobiography of a Dead Man.'"

"He must have known that his goose was cooked when he wrote it."

"So it would seem. Listen: 'I, John Boland——'"

"His name was John Boland, eh?"

"Must have been if he says so himself. 'I, John Boland, of Dundee, New York, fifty-three years of age, a prospector by occupation, being a prisoner in the hands of a bandit band, whose leader is Dave Hamlin, an Arizona desperado, and face to face with certain death in an underground vault of the monastery of the Order of the Black Brotherhood, now in possession of the said bandits, who are masquerading in the garb of the said order, the members of which they have probably murdered, for not a single one of them is on the premises, do hereby write down the facts concerning my capture, and the reason why I am the victim of a horrible fate.'"

"So the leader of the bandits is an American named Dave Hamlin," said Bob. "If we are so fortunate as to get away from this place we'll avenge John Boland's death by putting the authorities up to the fraud that is hidden within the monastery's walls."

"If we don't do it Mr. Ardsley will, so we may calculate that the bandit gang will have to abandon their snap and take to the wilds, or else stand a siege that would end in their capture," said Tom.

"Go on with that autobiography."

Tom accordingly proceeded.

Boland gave a brief sketch of his life from the time he left Dundee after his wife's death to the day when he accidentally discovered the secret of Claim No. 7.

He stated that many years since an old peon accidentally discovered gold in the Sierra de Antunez Mountains.

As soon as the news spread a rush was made by a number of people to secure claims in the favored district.

Twelve claims were staked out in the mountainside, and work was begun on all of them.

Shafts were sunk in some places and tunnels bored in others.

More or less gold was found in all the mines, but finally all petered out and became dead ones but Claim No. 7.

For several years this mine yielded a rich revenue to its fortunate owners.

There were three of them, and after a time two of the three sold out to the third, and for many months he worked it alone, making a rich harvest.

The possession of so much wealth finally turned his brain.

One day he disappeared, and though a long search was made for him he was never found.

Strange to say, soon afterward the rich golden vein which had made the claim famous gave out abruptly, and after many attempts to relocate it the mine was abandoned as a dead one.

Years passed, and John Boland came to the Sierra de Antunez on a prospecting tour.

He spent many weeks to no purpose, and was on the point of going elsewhere when a curious accident which happened to him resulted in a most astonishing discovery in connection with Claim No. 7.

"One afternoon," the manuscript went on, "I wandered into a kind of cul de sac in the mountains. While making a survey of it I stepped into a bunch of bushes, and the next moment I shot down through a hole and landed in a sort of underground room about twelve feet square."

"What's that?" cried Bob in a tone of interest.

"The description answers to this place," replied Tom, now intensely interested himself. "Listen; 'Unable to return to the surface by the way I had come, I hunted around for an outlet, feeling that if I failed to find such a thing that I should die of starvation. Alas! Better had such been my fate, than the refined tortures which have since fallen to my lot. As I groped my way about I suddenly found myself at the mouth of what appeared to be a tunnel. I followed it. It led me down through the mountain for a long distance to what appeared to be an old disused mine. While seeking to make my way out to the open air I walked into a roomy section of the mine that appeared to have no outlet save that through which I had entered. I trod on something that flared up with a snap. It was a match. I picked it up while it was still aglow and found myself close beside a table on which stood a lantern with a partly consumed candle in it.'"

"Say, this is getting decidedly interesting," said Bob.

"I managed to light the lantern at the expense of a scorched finger, and then proceeded to survey the room," went on Tom, reading from the book. "On a bunk in the corner I saw the moldering remains of a man whose identity was disclosed by certain documents on the table to be Senor Antonio Diaz, the missing owner of Claim No. 7. In the opposite corner I beheld numerous bags of pure gold quartz, worth a small fortune. From the senor's diary I learned that he himself had obtained all this gold from the mine, which was Claim No. 7, by cutting into the vein of ore at a certain point ahead of the spot where the miners were working. It was evidently a crazy freak on his part. His diary showed that as soon as he heard the miners approaching the point where he had been surreptitiously working, chiefly at night, for many weeks, he immediately sealed up the continuation of the vein in such a way as to indicate that the lode stopped at that point. His scheme succeeded, and the mine was soon after abandoned as having petered out."

Boland then went on to say that after much difficulty he managed to find his way to the main part of the mine, and so out into the air, with a valuable secret in his possession which he intended to avail himself of.

He at once hunted up the heirs of Senor Antonio Diaz and bought the claim as it stood for a song.

Then he looked around for a man he could trust to help him remove the bags of quartz.

Unfortunately, his selection fell upon a smooth-tongued chap who was acting as a spy for the bandit band while posing as an honest man.

Boland, however, was too prudent to tell his new associate where the bags of quartz were hidden in the depths of Claim No. 7, but he told enough to give the rascal the idea that he had discovered the place where the vein which had given out started anew.

Finding that Boland only intended to use him to assist in removing sundry bags of the ore which he presumed the prospector had dug out himself, and would not confide the secret location of the vein itself, he communicated with the bandit leader, and Dave Hamlin decided to capture Boland and bring the secret from him.

Accordingly the prospector was taken prisoner on his way to the mine with his traitorous companion in a wagon.

Boland then detailed all the artifices and threats employed by the bandit leader to make him give up the secret, and how on his persistent refusal he was finally entombed in the vault in the foundation of the monastery.

Here he was told he would be kept until he revealed the location of the gold vein in Claim No. 7.

Believing that the bandit would not release him even if he made the required confession, he determined to go to his death with the secret in his possession.

One day he found that one of the stones in the vault was loose, and could easily be worked out.

For several days he amused himself in prying it loose.

Then he decided to write this statement of his case in a memorandum book he had in his possession, with a lead pencil he had, and hide it in the cavity under the loose stone, believing that some time in the future it would be found by somebody deserving of the good luck it pointed the way to.

Boland wound up his aut biography, as he called it, with a close description of the cul de sac in the mountain, showing how, by descending through the hole and following the tunnel, a person could reach the room in Claim No. 7 where the bags of rich gold ore were concealed.

The body of the dead Senor Antonio Diaz he had buried

in one of the holes of the mine, and he explained how the person who reached the mine via the cul de sac route could find their way out by the main entrance, and could afterward return by the same way if they took particular care to note the guiding marks he had made on the rocks and walls.

On the last page Boland, after stating that the papers showing his title to Claim No. 7 were deposited in the Magdalena Bank, willed all his rights to the property to the person into whose possession the memorandum book fell.

He signed it with his full name, and at the bottom added, "And may the good Heaven have mercy on my soul. Amen."

"That's all," said Tom, closing the book and looking at his companion. "What do you think about it, Bob?"

"I think it is a wonderful yarn."

"The tunnel seems to point the way for us to get out of this place."

"Then we'd better lose no time in following it, for I can't reach the open air any too quick," replied Bob, springing to his feet.

CHAPTER X.

CLAIM NO. 7.

With the lantern in his hand, Tom led the way into the tunnel, which looked as if it had once upon a time, ages before, perhaps, been a natural water course, for it was undoubtedly the work of nature, and not of man.

As they proceeded they found it varied in height and width, but was always large enough for them to proceed in an upright position, though they frequently had to bend their heads to avoid contact with some stone projecting from the roof.

"As Boland came down here, the first time, at least, without a light, he must have made much slower progress than we are doing," said Tom, after they had gone several hundred yards into the bowels of the range.

"I'll bet he did. And I should say it would take a whole lot of nerve to penetrate this tunnel without knowing how one is going to come out in the end," replied Bob.

"A person will take most any kind of a risk when his life is at stake," said Tom. "Boland saw he could not return to the surface by way of the hole through which he entered in the same accidental manner we did, and the tunnel offered the only possible avenue of escape from his predicament. If it ended in a blank wall somewhere in the depths he could not be much worse off than in the hole we have just left. At any rate, he could return the way he came. Even if this memorandum book had not referred to this place I intended to follow the tunnel on a bare chance that it would lead us to the open air."

"It seems a most remarkable circumstance that we should tumble into the very place that the book speaks about, doesn't it?"

"It certainly does."

"Even with the description of the locality for a guide, we might have hunted the mountain range over for weeks before we would have found the cul de sac, as he calls it."

"That's right," nodded Tom.

"It will be great if we find those bags of gold quartz which Boland says represent a small fortune."

"We'll have to go to Magdalena and hire a team."

"But we'll need protection. Those bandits might come on us unawares and gobble us up with the quartz, too."

"I'm thinking that the bandits will have all they can attend to in trying to avoid being gobbled up themselves by the police whom we shall put on their track."

"It is probable that the authorities will send a detachment of soldiers to round them up. It is hard for us to say what the police amount to in this country. We haven't seen any of them so far."

"It makes no difference to us whether soldiers or police are sent out after the miners, as long as they are captured. I dare say they'll all be hanged for putting the marks out of the way."

"I wonder what they did with those poor devils? I should think there must have been three or four of them in the monastery when the bandits captured them. It seems terrible to think of such a wicked deed."

"Those villagers haven't any conscience. Is there anything worse than the cruel fate they meted out to Juan Boland?" said Bob.

"Maybe there are other vaults in the monastery where the dead bodies of the monks will be found when the place is thoroughly searched," said Tom.

"I wouldn't be surprised. No doubt the whole bunch was shut up and allowed to starve to death. Don't speak any more about it. It gives me the shivers."

The tunnel had as many curves as a snake.

Sometimes it made abrupt turns, almost at right angles, but as a rule when it deviated from a straight course the turn was a roundish one.

"I wonder how far down into the mountain we are now?" asked Bob, after they had gone on for some time.

"You know as much about the matter as I do," replied Tom.

"I should imagine it was about time we reached the mine."

"We may only be half way there, or not even that."

"Oh, heavens! Don't say that. I'm sick of this."

"Brace up. We've got plenty of time. It's just one o'clock by my watch."

"Is that all? I thought it was three or four."

"Just think what a story we'll have to tell when we get back home."

"When we get back; but remember we're not out of this blasted tunnel yet."

"We'll get out by following the directions given by Boland in the book."

"I hope so; but suppose we get mixed up in his directions, or something has blocked up the road since he was here—what then?"

"Don't be pessimistic, Bob. Always look on the bright side of things, and you are sure to feel ever so much better."

Bob made no answer, and they jogged on a while in silence.

"How is the light? Do you think it will last?" asked Bob at length.

"It will last an hour yet, I guess."

"And if we're not out of the mountain by that time we'll be in a nice fix!"

"Not any worse than Boland the first time he came here."

"But Boland was a prospector and miner, and accustomed to underground places."

"Oh, we ought to reach Claim No. 7 some time before the light goes out."

"What we ought to do and what we will do are two different things."

"Cut it out, Bob. Your talk is enough to give one the nightmare."

Another spell of silence followed, during which they made considerable progress along the monotonous tunnel.

"If we find our way blocked and have to go back it will take us a year," said Bob, who couldn't keep silent long.

Tom didn't answer him.

He had no idea that they would have to go back, and in any case it wouldn't do them any good to go back, for the hole they had left above was like an old-fashioned rat-trap—very easy to get into, but practically impossible to get out of.

He had the utmost confidence in Boland's directions, and felt assured that it was only a matter of time before they would see daylight around them again.

At any rate, his attention was fully occupied in watching the ground ahead of him, and that prevented him from harboring gloomy thoughts like his companion, who had nothing to do but tag on after him.

"Say, why don't you say something?" said Bob, after another short silence.

"Because I've got nothing to say," replied Tom.

"You might talk to keep a fellow from having the dumps."

"Why don't you think about those bags of gold quartz we expect to find when we reach the mine?"

"Because I ain't sure we'll find them. It seems too good to be true."

"We'll find them, don't you worry. Boland said they were in a certain part of the mine, and as he saw them they must be there."

"I guess it's a long time since he saw them. The bandits must have searched the mine for them as well as for the lost lode. If they found the bags that will be the end of them as far as we are concerned."

"I'll gamble on it they didn't find the bags. They're lying in the mine waiting for us to come along."

"I wish we'd reach that blamed Claim No. 7. Seems to

me we've been long enough in this tunnel to walk from the Harlem River to the Battery."

"You're dreaming, Bob. We've only been forty minutes in the tunnel. I've been keeping tab on the time with my watch."

"It has seemed like two hours, at least."

"What are you going to do with your share of the quartz after it's turned into money?" asked Tom, trying to divert Bob's thoughts.

"I never count my chickens before they're hatched."

"But suppose your chickens were hatched?"

"Well, I'd suggest that we should buy an automobile, if we could find a good one down here, and tour the country in it."

"That would be a good plan. I think I would be willing to join you if the roads were good enough."

"After that I'd be in favor of buying a yacht, or some other small vessel, and sailing back to New York instead of returning the way we came."

"That isn't a bad scheme, either. Though, on the whole, I think I'd prefer to return by the way of St. Louis."

"Why St. Louis?"

"I'd like to see Miss Ardsley and her father again in case we should not meet them before they leave this country."

"Ho! I see how the land lies," chuckled Bob. "You're mashed on that girl."

"Nonsense! How could I be mashed on her when I've only seen her once, and under rather strenuous circumstances?"

"Once is enough where a girl is as pretty as she is."

"Oh, she isn't the only pretty girl in the world. There's Pepita, for instance. I think you called her a peach."

"She is. I think she's all to the mustard. I wish I could speak Spanish."

"If you could you'd go back to the inn and make love to her, I suppose?" laughed Tom.

"I wouldn't mind doing it if you didn't butt in."

"You are welcome to her. I don't want her."

"You wouldn't say that if you hadn't met Miss Ardsley."

"Never mind about Miss—hello! I guess we've come to the end of the tunnel at last," said Tom in an animated tone.

"Have we? Hooray!" cried Bob excitedly.

A few steps farther on carried them into a rough-looking cavern, the floor of which resembled the rocky bed of a stream that had run dry.

"Now, let's see how we shall proceed," said Tom, stopping and consulting the directions furnished by John Boland. "On reaching the rocky opening at the end of the tunnel,"

he read, "turn to the left till you hit a narrow passage, which follow, and it will take you direct to the room where the bags of quartz are standing. There you will find fresh candles, matches and a sack of sundry provisions. By this time everything but the canned meats and the two flasks of whisky are rotted away."

They turned to the left, picking their way over the stones, and finally reached the narrow passage.

"Now for the room where the bags of quartz are stored," said Tom, once more leading the way.

"And where we shall find fresh candles, which I think as much of as the quartz, because it would give me the horrors to be in the dark down here," said Bob.

The passage was a tortuous one, but not long.

They soon came into the rocky cavern that Boland referred to as a room.

Advancing into the place with the lantern held above his head, Tom gazed around, and Bob did likewise.

There was a small table and a chair in the center.

On the former stood a lantern with a fresh candle in it, and beside it several candles and a box of matches.

On the chair lay the provision bag.

In one corner stood a dozen or fifteen small bags full of what the boys knew must be the gold quartz referred to by Boland.

One of them was open at the top, and it took but a glance to show the boys that it was the richest quartz they had ever seen.

"That should pan out many thousands of dollars to the ton," said Bob, who, because his father was a mining man, prided himself on his general knowledge of mining matters.

"I'll bet it will. Boland says there is a small fortune in those bags alone. There is a greater fortune for us in the lode which Boland says he found and marked with a cross."

"No doubt of that, if we are allowed to take possession of Claim No. 7 and work it."

"We won't do anything about that till we have a consultation with your father. If the matter can be arranged he will fix it up. At any rate, we hold the secret of its existence, and it isn't likely anybody else will be able to get at it."

"I'll light the other lantern," said Bob, "and then we'll try to get out of here by the marked route described by the prospector."

"Let's take a look at the provisions. If there is anything worth eating I want a bite, for I'm as hungry as a hunter," said Tom.

Emptying the bag of its contents they found a dozen cans marked "Corned Beef" and "Roast Beef," each bearing the label of a noted Chicago establishment.

There were also the two flasks of whisky, quart size, mentioned by Boland.

Tom found a can opener in the bag and opened one of the tins of roast beef.

The meat appeared to be perfectly good, so the boys ate it all up between them.

"That tasted good, but it would have gone better if we had had some bread or crackers," said Bob.

Tom agreed with him, and then referring to their directions again, pointed out the way they were to proceed in order to reach the main part of the mine.

CHAPTER XI.

BACK AT THE INN.

The route they were to follow was not easy to keep track of.

They found themselves continually running against the blank wall where there appeared to be no outlet.

How Boland had ever got out of the maze in the dark, and without the guiding marks the boys had the advantage of, was a mystery to them.

"It was just luck," said Bob, and Tom guessed it was.

They were out of their real troubles and in the mine proper some little time before they became aware of the fact.

Finally, when Tom's watch pointed to the hour of five they saw an opening right ahead of them, and walking out of it found themselves in a small ravine with the starry heavens above their heads.

"Glory hallelujah!" cried Bob in great glee. "We're out of the blamed mountain at last. I never was so glad of anything in all my life."

Tom was glad, too, but he didn't make such a fuss over it as his friend.

They blew out their lanterns and sat down to take a rest. A cool breeze came up the ravine and fanned their heated brows.

They rather enjoyed the wild solitude and perfect silence of the place, and for several minutes neither spoke.

"I suppose Mr. Ardsley and his daughter have been snoozing away these six or seven hours," remarked Bob.

"I'm afraid our failure to appear there has given them the idea that we were captured by the bandits," replied Tom.

"I wouldn't be surprised. We did have a narrow squeak of it."

"That hole in the ground saved our bacon at the critical moment."

"But your life it did. We probably would have been dead ones in a short time if we hadn't disappeared from the cul de sac."

"It's my idea that when we didn't turn up by midnight Mr. Ardsley hunted up a team to take him and Miss Dora on to Magdalena, in order to notify the authorities of the true state of affairs at the monastery, informing them that we are probably held prisoners by the band, and urging immediate steps to be taken for the capture of the rascals and our rescue. If I am right, the bandits will soon have to fight for their lives if they have not taken time by the forelock and abandoned the place."

"They will probably retreat into these mountains, so we will have to keep our eyes skinned in making our way out."

"Day is beginning to break. Let's go down the ravine and see how things look from there. There appears to be a good road through here, made, of course, by the people

who worked the twelve claims in this neighborhood. The road ought to take us straight to civilization."

The boys walked to the end of the ravine, passing the six abandoned mines in that direction, and then they saw that they were close to the foot of the range.

They saw that the road terminated at a small wharf on the bank of a river that ran northward.

Evidently the ore taken out of Claim No. 7 and the other mines had been transported to its destination by water.

The boys walked down to the wharf and saw that it was fast going to ruin.

Underneath it Bob observed a large rowboat, partly full of water.

"Here's just the thing for us to get away in," he said. "There's a pair of oars in it. All we have to do will be to dump or bail the water out of it, and then we can make off. The bandits, even if they see us, won't be able to get at us, unless they try to head off by swimming out, and in that case we can fill them full of lead."

Tom stood and looked at the boat reflectively.

"That's a good-sized boat," he said. "Do you know I have an idea."

"What is it?"

"I was thinking it would be just the thing for us to carry away those bags of gold ore in."

"I guess it would answer first rate for that purpose, now that you mention it. But where could we carry the stuff to? We don't know what river this is, nor where it leads to."

"I thought you knew that the only river around this part of the country is the Santa Cruz, which runs straight up into Arizona."

"You're right. I forgot about it. Then your plan is to carry that ore up the river into Arizona?"

"I was figuring the matter in my mind."

"It would be a pretty long pull."

"Yes. It is probably close on to 100 miles to the border line by the river. That would take us all of four days, I should judge, taking things easy. Then it would take us all of another day to go to Rawlings, on the Southern Pacific, which has several smelters. In fact, we must calculate that it would take us the best part of a week to carry that ore from here to Rawlings," said Tom.

"And how long is it going to take us to get out of that inner cavern?" said Bob. "It was no fool of a job for us to find our way out without anything. We'd have to make at least a dozen trips back and forth, for we couldn't carry more than one bag of the ore at a time between us. It would take us the whole day, working hard, even if we were lucky enough to get through in that time."

"Even so, it's worth it, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's worth it, all right; but we couldn't do much to-day, for I'm about fagged out. I feel like turning in somewhere now and having a good eight hours' sleep. I should think you would, too."

Bob yawned as he spoke and looked sleepy.

"Oh, brace up! Can't you stand a little hardship?"

"Why, we've been on our feet since early yesterday morning. Do you take me for a horse?"

"You haven't had any harder time of it than I have."

"I didn't say I had. I should think you'd feel it as much as I do. I'm for returning to the mine, hunting up a soft spot where we're not likely to be surprised by the bandits, and taking a good, solid rest."

"I have a better plan than that."

"Let's hear it."

"We'll turn to and get that boat from under the wharf, dump the water out of it, and row down the river to a point somewhere near the inn. Then we'll tie it up, go to the inn, and turn into a good bed. When we wake up we can sit down to a decent meal, and at the same time enjoy a bit of Pepita's society. We will also be able to learn if Mr. Ardsley and his daughter reached the inn all right last evening, and afterwards went on to Magdalena. We will find out, too, whether anything has yet been done about cleaning out the bandits. Then, after putting in the night at the inn we'll turn out to-morrow morning as fresh as two daisies ready to come back here and attend to business. We'll need a week's supply of provisions to see us up the river, and we can buy all we want at the inn and fetch it up in the boat. Do you know of any better plan than that?"

"No, I don't. It's all right, and I'm with you. I'm willing to do 'most anything for the chance of getting into a real bed," said Bob, brightening up.

"Then we'll start right in and carry it out."

It was now daylight, but they couldn't see a human being in sight.

They turned to, hauled the boat out from under the wharf, got the water out of it, and getting aboard shoved off the shore and headed down the stream.

After pulling pretty steadily for a couple of hours they caught a distant view of the monastery on the slope of the Sierra de Antunez range.

They judged that the inn wasn't more than two or three miles off from the river, so they hauled in to the shore, moored the boat in a secluded spot, took the bearings of the place, and started off across the unoccupied country at a smart walk.

It was an hour before they came in sight of the inn, squatting drowsily beside the road in the sunshine.

Another fifteen minutes brought them to the door, and the first person they saw on entering the public room was Pepita, busy at some household duty.

She uttered an exclamation of surprise on beholding them. "Buenos dias, senorita" (Good-morning, miss), said Tom, raising his hat to her.

"Why, Senor Hammond, this is a great surprise to me," Pepita replied in Spanish, "and you don't know how glad I am to see you and your friend back again."

"You aren't any gladder than we are to get here, after what we've been through since we left here yesterday afternoon for the monastery yonder."

"We've heard a dreadful story about that place from an American senor and his daughter, who reached here last evening. We—my father and myself—could not believe it at first, for it seemed incredible that the monks of the Black Brotherhood should turn out to be bandits and not the religious men we have always supposed them to be."

"The real monks were no doubt murdered by the bandits when the rascals took possession of the monastery. When that event happened I have not the least idea, but it must have been two or three years ago. Since then the bandits have hoodwinked the people around here by representing themselves as the real monks of the monastery. They must have done the trick well to evade the discovery of their true character."

"The American senor and his daughter told us they had been prisoners at the monastery for four days, and that it was through the help of you and your friend, who had in some way secured entrance into the place, that they were enabled to escape. They said that you came away with them, but when you and your friend did not follow them here last night they appeared to be much distressed, and said they feared you had been captured by the bandits while covering their retreat."

"No, we were not captured, else we would not be here now talking to you," replied Tom. "We were pursued up the mountains for a long distance, and that accounts for our not reaching the inn until this hour."

Pepita's father now appeared on the scene, and he expressed his surprise on seeing the two boys who were supposed to be in the hands of the bandits of the monastery.

He told them that Mr. Ardsley, after waiting two hours for them to appear, had secured his team and gone on to Magdalena as fast as possible to notify the authorities of that town of the state of affairs at the monastery, and he (the landlord) was looking for a squad of mounted troopers to appear at any moment to investigate the situation.

A light breakfast was hastily prepared for Tom and Bob.

After they had partaken of it they went to the room placed at their disposal, turned in and were soon asleep.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ATTACK ON THE BANDIT BAND.

The boys were dead to the world for the rest of the day, and were utterly oblivious of the fact that a strong party of mounted troopers had passed the inn about noon and made straight for the gate of the monastery.

The gate was found to be locked, and no attention was paid to their demands for admission.

The troopers then prepared to get over the wall.

No sooner was this move put into effect than the invaders were met by a sudden and well-directed fire from a building that had been situated in front of the main entrance to

the monastery, and from all the windows of the third floor bearing on the scene of action.

The attack of the troopers was repulsed with considerable loss on their part, and their commander, feeling that his force was not strong enough to capture the place, withdrew his men to the shelter of a near-by wood, and proceeded to invest the bandits' citadel with a view of cutting off any attempt they might make to escape, after which he sent a messenger post haste to Magdalena for reinforcements, and his dead and wounded to the inn.

A desultory fire was kept up by the bandits at intervals, and occasionally answered by the troopers when any of the enemy exposed themselves.

Such was the state of affairs when Tom and Bob came downstairs with a good appetite for dinner about five o'clock.

Pepita told Tom all that had happened so far.

"They're a pretty nervy bunch to hold out against the soldiers," said Bob, after Tom had translated to him the girl's explanation of what had happened at the monastery.

"That monastery, with its thick walls, and high surrounding wall, is as good as a fort. It can only be attacked from two sides, as the entire rear is protected by the ravine, and from that point the building is inaccessible. With a good supply of provisions those scoundrels may be able to stand quite a siege."

"Not if the troopers brought up one good piece of artillery. That would batter their citadel about their heads, and soon make the monastery untenable for the bandits," replied Bob.

"I guess you're right; but it seems a shame to destroy such an ancient building, which is one of the landmarks of old Mexico."

"Well, it isn't our funeral whatever the troopers do. It is up to them now to exterminate a band that has given the country a whole lot of trouble in the last two or three years. I reckon they'll do it, even if they have to raze the entire building to the ground."

"If they clean those rascals out it will relieve us of any danger of meeting them in the mountains when we return for those sacks of gold quartz."

"That will be an important advantage for us, so I hope not a mother's son of them escapes."

Pepita now called the boys to their dinner.

They had a tender roasted chicken, vegetables and fruits, and made a hearty meal.

Then they returned to their seats under the tree and watched the slow progress of events at the monastery.

A puff of smoke occasionally issued from the bushes or behind a rock, when a trooper fired at some bandit who had incautiously exposed himself, or a similar puff spurted at intervals from one of the windows of the monastery; in both cases the distant crack of a rifle reached the ears of the boys.

Finally the sun set and darkness fell on the face of the landscape, but the gloom was not very intense, because of the cloudless and brilliant sky.

Pepita was very anxious to learn how the boys had got into the monastery.

The contents of the hampers which Tom and Bob had thrown into the water barrel had not been discovered, so no suspicion of the means employed by the young Americans had occurred to either the girl or her father.

"So you want to know how we got in there?" smiled Tom, as Pepita took her seat between the boys.

"Si, senor."

"Nothing is impossible to us Americans, senorita. We are the people. When we set out to do a thing you may consider it as good as done. We'll get there if we have to break a leg."

He then explained to Pepita how he and Bob got into the monastery and all that happened to them there, including how they found Mr. Ardsley and his daughter imprisoned on the third floor, and afterward assisted them to escape.

"You Americans are a brave and smart people," said the girl with a smile.

"Bet your life we are. There are no flies on us."

"No flies on you, senor? Explain. I do not understand what you mean," said the puzzled senorita, who was not familiar with American slang.

Tom laughed.

"I guess there are no flies on you, either, Senorita Pepita."

"Ah, senor, you are making fun at me," she replied with a pout.

"I wouldn't think of doing such a thing," answered Tom, who then explained as well as he could translate the expression into Spanish the meaning of it.

"The senor is so funny," laughed the girl.

"I'm not half as funny as my friend Bob here," he said.

"Are you very funny, Senor Bob?" she said in Spanish.

"What did she say, Tom?" asked his friend, looking embarrassed.

"She forgot you do not understand her language, and asked you if you didn't think it was a fine night," grinned Tom.

"Si, senorita," said Bob with a smile.

Pepita smiled roguishly at him.

"Gee! I wish I could speak Spanish!" blurted out Bob.

"It's a blamed bore to sit alongside a pretty girl and not be able to converse with her."

Tom translated his words for the girl's benefit.

She was pleased with Bob's reference to her as a pretty girl, and favored him with one of her most bewitching glances.

"Say, did you tell her what I said?" asked Bob.

"I did," replied Tom. "Why don't you talk to her through me? She thinks you are all right."

"I would if I thought you would tell her just what I said, and not put up any job on me."

"I'll do the right thing, honor bright," answered Tom.

So Bob ventured on a talk with Pepita, Tom acting as a faithful interpreter.

The moon rose earlier that evening than the night previous, and its silvery rays brought the mountain range and the old monastery out in bold relief.

Presently the three young people heard the rapid galloping of a force of approaching horsemen from the direction of the village.

"Who have we here?" asked Bob.

"More troopers, I guess," replied Tom.

"Reinforcements, eh? Now there'll be something doing up at the monastery."

A force of fifty mounted soldiers came dashing up and halted in front of the inn.

The officer in command dismounted and called for the landlord.

Pepita's father answered the summons.

After a few words passed between them, the officer ordered his men to dismount and enter the inn for some liquid refreshment.

This was served to them by the landlord and Pepita, who was called upon to assist.

The troopers remained about a quarter of an hour, then remounted and dashed at a gallop for the monastery.

The boys could easily follow them up the slope, and finally saw them diverge away from the building where they disappeared among the trees.

"That crowd, with those already on the ground, ought to be able to settle the hash of the bandits," said Tom.

"The rascals show good nerve in standing their ground and giving fight," replied Bob. "I should think they would have fled into the wilds of the mountain at the first attack, which would have given them a big advantage over the soldiers who would have been obliged to follow them on foot, with every chance of falling into an ambush."

"Maybe they think their position so strong that they can beat the attacking party off, and so remain in possession of the monastery."

"If the Mexican soldiers are any kind of fighters they ought to be able to carry that place in short order. They're going to try it now," said Bob, pointing at the scattered bunches of dark figures that issued on foot from the shelter of the trees.

Those figures made a rush for the front wall of the monastery and were met by a succession of rifle flashes from the top of the wall.

Soldiers in the rear of the attacking party opened a return fire, and the scene was lit up by frequent flashes of rifles.

"Gee! This is exciting," said Bob, as he, Tom, and Pepita watched the fight from their seats under the tree, while the landlord and his housekeeper stood in the doorway, and the two waitresses of the establishment looked on from the corner of the inn.

Black dots were soon seen ascending the white outer wall.

"There go the soldiers into the courtyard," said Tom.

"The bandits are peppering them good from the windows," replied Bob, as the flashes increased from the windows of the second story.

"Oh, the jig will soon be up," said Tom confidently.

Five minutes later the firing ceased entirely, and after that no more shots were heard.

"They must have surrendered," said Bob.

"They may be fighting inside the monastery," answered Tom.

"That's true enough, but their name is Mud by this time."

After a while they saw a bunch of black figures rush down the slope and run over to the ravine, which they entered and were lost to sight.

Other figures were seen ascending the mountain in the direction the boys had taken the night before.

"Looks as if a part of the rascals have managed to escape from the scene of combat," said Tom, "for the soldiers appear to be off in chase."

The watchers now saw a string of objects that they judged were the horses of the troopers, which had been tied in the woods, being led into the monastery courtyard.

That showed that the premises were in possession of the attacking party.

Half an hour passed without further developments, and Tom and Bob became impatient to learn the results of the conflict.

"Let's go up there and find out how things stand," suggested Bob.

"I'm with you," replied Tom promptly.

Pepita objected to their going on the ground that it would be dangerous.

"A fig for the danger," replied Tom. "We went through real peril last night during our flight from the bandits. You don't know how close we came to turning up our toes with our boots on, senorita. Remember, American boys never turn tail in the face of danger. Come on, Bob."

So they started for the monastery, but were halted by a sentry at the gate.

Tom asked to be allowed to enter and see the officer in charge, explaining who they were.

They were permitted to pass, and made their way inside the building to the dining-room of the building, where the commander of the troopers was holding forth.

Tom introduced himself and companion, and then inquired as to what had been accomplished.

The officer pointed to four corpses that lay in a corner, and to three wounded bandits, and said that the rest of the band had made their escape through an underground passage that led into the ravine.

"My men are in pursuit of them, however, and I hope to capture most of them before daylight," he concluded.

His reply was rather disappointing to the boys, for they realized that three-quarters of the band had got away, and they judged that most of them stood a good chance of getting off entirely, for they did not doubt that the rascals had many places in the range where they could retreat to, and then laugh at the efforts of their pursuers to find them.

This wouldn't have happened if the commander had at the start thrown a small detachment into the ravine to keep a lookout in that direction.

So the boys returned to the inn, and after reporting the unsatisfactory end of the fight, went to bed and slept soundly till morning.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE BANDITS.

When they came down to breakfast Pepita told them that a small detachment of the troopers had rounded up an hour previous with about a dozen prisoners, some of whom were wounded, in their charge.

"Well, that's pretty good news," replied Tom. "Maybe they'll be able to round up most of those rascals after all."

"I hope so, but I believe it's settled that we are to return to Claim No. 7 this morning, and begin the transfer of those bags of ore to our boat," replied Bob.

"It's settled, all right. The presence of a few scattered bandits in the range is not going to scare us from our purpose."

After breakfast Tom introduced Pepita's father, and arranged for the immediate purchase of several loads, a supply of food, and some other things that they intended taking with them.

He also selected a supply of fruit.

When everything was ready Tom had it packed in two wicker baskets, and the landlord agreed to send it down to their boat at the river on the back of a burro in charge of a servant when the boys were ready to start.

They partook of an early lunch, and after wishing Pepita and her father good-by, they started for the stream, Pepita standing under the tree and waving her handkerchief at them as long as they were in sight.

They reached the river in due time, and found their boat just as they left her.

After the two baskets were put into her the servant wished them "A mas ver" (good-by), and returned with the burro the way he came, while the boys boarded their boat and Tom took the first spell at the oars as they headed up the stream.

It was two o'clock by the time they reached the dilapidated wharf.

Shoving the craft under out of sight, and tying her to a spile, they started for Claim No. 7 with one of the roast fowls and a supply of bread and fruit to furnish them with a couple of meals.

They made their way up the ravine over the hard road that had been built years before for hauling purposes, and soon reached the entrance to the mine.

Entering, they lighted the lanterns and then proceeded to find their way back to the secret cavern by following the signs made by the dead prospector.

This time they took careful note of the way, leaving additional marks that they could not mistake, and in the course of twenty minutes re-entered the cavern where the bags were stored.

"We'll first convey these bags one by one into the mine proper," said Tom. "That will be as much as we can do to-day and well up in the evening. Then to-morrow we'll carry them down to the entrance of the mine. And when we get them there we will take them down to our boat."

"All right, Tom; whatever you say goes," acquiesced Bob.

"Then we'll begin right away with bag number one."

When Tom's watch indicated six o'clock they had carried eight bags into the mine, and Bob suggested that they knock off for supper.

They cut the fowl and the bread with their jack-knives, and made an excellent meal, washing it down with water from a spring they found in the place.

After a rest they resumed their work, and by eleven o'clock they had all the bags in the mine.

"That's enough for one day," said Tom, going to wash his hands at the spring.

"I should say so," returned Bob. "Our bed to-night will not be so soft as it was last night, but I guess we can put up with a little rough experience, considering what we're going to make by it."

They talked over their luck for a while, and what they expected to do with their wealth when they got it, and then, it being a little after midnight, they lay down, each with a blanket around him, which they had found in the cavern, and were presently asleep.

They awoke about seven, breakfasted off the chicken, with bread and fruit, and then made their way out to the place where they had carried the fourteen bags of gold ore, taking the remains of their provender with them.

It was close on to noon by the time they landed their fourteenth bag at the entrance of the mine.

Then they sat down and finished the chicken, and most of the bread and fruit.

"It will take us all the afternoon to get these bags down to the river," said Bob, shying a stone at a brilliantly tinted lizard lying asleep in the sunshine.

"It can't be helped if it does. We're not burros, and have got to take things easy. Now, if you've rested long enough, we'll start in."

They grabbed bag number one and started for the river with it.

"The way is down hill, that's some satisfaction," said Bob.

"I agree with you. Step out, now."

They soon found that carrying a heavy load in the hot sun, even if it was down hill, was no fool of a job.

By the time they had carried half the bags to the stream they felt ready to quit.

They stuck at it, however, taking frequent rests in the shade, and close on to sundown they landed the last one on the river bank.

They rested for fifteen minutes, then Tom got up and pulled the boat from under the wharf.

One basket of provisions was placed in the bow and the other in the stern, and the bags were put in so as to "trim ship," as the expression is—that is, the weight was evenly distributed fore and aft, leaving two vacant spaces for the boys to sit and row.

"Now we'll eat supper if it's all the same to you," said Bob.

That suited Tom, so they got out a meat pie by way of variation, and made a meal of it, with bread and fruit.

"I guess we'd better do a good part of our rowing at night, and lie up in some shady nook during the heat of the day," said Bob.

"Your suggestion is all right, and we'll adopt it if circumstances favor it."

"Say, Tom," said Bob suddenly, "there's something moving through the bushes yonder. Whatever it is, it's heading this way."

Tom looked in the direction indicated by his companion and saw that the bushes were agitated in more than one place by the passage of some living objects.

These objects were coming toward them.

"We haven't seen any wild animals since we've been here," replied Tom, "but that isn't saying there may not be plenty. I don't like the idea of letting anything come close enough to pounce on us unawares. I guess we'd better get aboard and shove off into the stream."

Tom jumped into the boat and seized an oar to push off with as soon as Bob got in.

Before the latter could make a move three hard-looking men sprang up out of the bushes and, with wild yells, started for the boat.

The boys recognized the chap in advance as the bandit whom they knocked out in the room on the third floor of the monastery.

"Quick. Bob, jump in, and push off at the same time. Never mind if you do get wet. It will never do for those rascals to catch us!" cried Tom, giving the boat a shove with his oar.

Bob helped matters by pushing at the stern, wading out after the boat.

"Come back here, or it'll be worse for you!" roared Dave Hamlin, rushing into the water, followed by his two associates.

"Stand back or I'll smash you!" cried Tom in a resolute tone, flourishing the oar to cover Bob's retreat.

Hamlin drew his revolver and fired at Tom, whose position in the boat made him an excellent mark for a bullet.

Although the range was short, and Hamlin an uncommonly good shot, he missed the boy by a hair.

Before he could fire again Bob yanked out his gun and blazed away.

The bullet hit Hamlin in the arm, and with a roar of pain he let his weapon fall into the water.

As the boat drifted away from the shore the other bandits, seeing their prey was getting away, pulled out their revolvers and began to shoot.

Fortunately the falling night and the dark background beyond the boat prevented the ruffians from getting a good aim.

While Bob returned the fire, Tom got out the other oar and pulled for all he was worth.

It was the most exciting moment in the lives of the two boys.

CHAPTER XIV.

WORKING UP THE RIVER.

It is not the pleasantest sensation in the world to feel the wind of one or more bullets whizzing past one's ears, and yet the average person can get used to it if he survives the ordeal.

By degrees Tom got the boat out of range, and then he eased up.

"By George! That was a close call, Bob," he said.

"Bet your life it was. It was lucky neither of us got hit."

"They couldn't come much closer and miss than two of the bullets did in my case. We'll keep on across the river, and then it will be too dark for those rascals to make out whether we are bound up or down the river."

The bandits stood up to their waists in the water and watched them, no doubt cursing their ill luck in failing to capture the boys.

Finally the boys saw their fading figures and on the bank, and then they lost sight of them.

As soon as it was as dark as it was likely to be, Tom turned the boat's head up stream and began pulling in slow, measured strokes.

The boys pulled alternately until midnight, by which time they were so tired out that they had to put into the shore and land.

They secured the boat to the bank, and as neither felt in condition to stand watch, they decided they would have to risk going to sleep at the same time.

They crawled into some bushes close by, and almost before they had stretched themselves out they were fast asleep.

The sun was shining when they awoke, and crawling out of their retreat, they hastened to see if everything was all right with the boat.

To their great satisfaction nothing had happened to it or its cargo, and they proceeded to eat their breakfast.

The country around was but thinly settled, for they saw only two small houses in the distance.

Breakfast over, they shoved off and continued their way up the river.

About noon they came to a wooded district on the nearest bank, and as the sun was now pouring its rays straight down on the landscape, they were glad to land and seek the shelter of the trees.

Here they remained for several hours, and then resumed their trip.

As soon as it got dark they tied up on the bank and had supper.

While eating they saw many lights shining through the darkness in various directions, and judged they came from houses scattered about the landscape.

The Sierra de Antunez range still stretched along the opposite shore, and as far north as they could see.

The moon rose early that evening, and under its mellow beams the boys resumed their toilsome journey toward the land of the Stars and Stripes.

Tom wondered if he held a place in the thoughts of Dora Ardsley that night.

"Doubtless she and her father are still at Magdalena, waiting to receive news about us. The commander of the detachment which routed the bandits will be able to report that we were not captured by the rascals, and so the Ardsleys will expect us to show up soon at the town. They would be rather astonished to learn that we are rowing a cargo of gold ore up the Santa Cruz River, but there is very little chance of them finding that fact out," thought Tom, as he pulled at the oars.

Late that night they pulled the boat up a little creek, where they intended to stay till morning.

They hid the boat in a mass of rushes and walked over to a deserted house they found a short distance off.

The building comprised a story and a half, the upper section being nothing more than a low loft, to which access was obtained by a ladder in a corner.

There was nothing at all in the single room of the ground floor, but there was a lot of loose straw in the loft.

This, when gathered together, was enough to make two soft beds, so the boys decided to roost there for the night, with the stars peeping in on them through a score of openings.

They had been asleep a couple of hours when Tom awoke with a start.

At first he could not understand what had aroused him, but he soon became aware that there were two or more persons in the room below.

They were talking together, and what particularly attracted his attention was the fact that their conversation was carried on in English.

The men had a light, for Tom could see it shining through a crack in the floor near his head.

With due caution he crawled over to the hole and placed his eye to it.

With a start he recognized the three bandits they had escaped from on the previous evening.

He soon found that he and Bob were the subjects of their discourse.

"We ought to be able to head them off to-morrow morning at the Bend," said Dave Hamlin. "We'll tie a stone to their

legs and sink 'em in the river, and then we'll take the boat. It's just the thing we want to escape from this blamed country in."

"You owe one of them somethin' for the bullet you got in your arm."

"Owe 'em somethin'? Well, I rather guess I do! It was them that made me a prisoner the other night in the room where I had the girl confined. Afterwards they helped our two prisoners off. The escape of the old man and his daughter is what led to the attack on our stronghold by the troopers. I shan't rest until I've had full revenge on the boys. What puzzles me is how they got into the monastery without being discovered. Villanos, who was in charge of the gate, swore that they didn't come over the wall, nor through the gate. He only opened it once during the afternoon while we were away on that procession, and that was to let in Bruno and Anson with a burro laden with provisions, which disappeared in a most mysterious way after they left the inn."

"What's the difference? They got in somehow, and their gettin' in done us up. The band is broken up, and them as isn't dead by this time are captured. The soldiers are scouring the district for any that has escaped, so we ain't got no time to lose gettin' back to the good old United States."

They continued to talk about one thing or another, and especially about getting square with the two boys, to whom they laid all their present trouble, for an hour, and Tom listened to them, while Bob slept on, unconscious that their three enemies were so close to them.

"Well, let's turn in and take a snooze," said Hamlin at last, with a yawn. "We've had a hard day of it dodgin' them sogers. Hello! What's that?"

To Tom's dismay Bob rolled over in his sleep and scraped his shoe loudly on the boards.

The noise attracted the instant attention of the three ruffians below, and they looked up at the ceiling.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

"There's somebody up there," said Hamlin with an imprecation.

"Maybe what we heard was a rat. There's nobody livin' in this old shack," replied one of his companions.

"It's somebody that's hidin' there," said the bandit leader.

"Maybe it's one of the band."

"And maybe it's some spy who'll carry the news of our whereabouts to the sogers."

"Then we'd better go up and see who it is. We can't afford to take chances. Hangin' is what we may count on if we're caught."

"I'm a-goin' up," said Hamlin, moving toward the ladder.

Tom realized that things were approaching a crisis, so, putting his hand over his companion's mouth, he woke him up.

"What's the matter?" asked Bob.

"We're in great danger. Get your gun out."

"What danger?" said Bob.

"The three bandits who attacked us near the old wharf last evening are downstairs."

"They are?"

"And, what's worse, they're coming up here."

As Tom spoke Bob heard the ladder shake under the weight of Hamlin.

"We'll give them a warm reception, then," muttered Bob, drawing his revolver.

A moment later the ruffian stuck his head up into the loft. The moonlight, shining through a dozen holes in the roof, made the place very bright, so that the bandit had no difficulty in seeing all that was up there.

He uttered an imprecation when his gaze rested on the two boys, whom he immediately recognized.

Forgetting perhaps, or at least disregarding the fact, that the boys were armed, he sprang into the loft.

"Surrender, you young imps!" he cried, drawing his revolver with his left hand, for his right arm was bound up and somewhat out of business.

Tom's reply was a shot from his revolver.

The bullet passed through Hamlin's chest, and he fell with a hoarse cry.

"Get hold of his revolver, Bob. There are two others below who are likely to give us a lot of trouble," said Tom.

One of the other rascals was in the act of following Hamlin up the ladder when the shot rang out, and the bandit's fall shook the rickety building.

He stopped and looked at his companion.

"Whoever is up there has shot Dave," he said.

"Then we'll go up and avenge him," replied the other, drawing his gun.

"They'll have the drop on one of us before we can get into the loft," said his associate, pausing irresolutely half way up the ladder.

"Bah! Let me lead the way if you're afraid," sneered the other ruffian.

Bob, peering down through a crack in the floor, decided that the speaker looked pretty dangerous, so he shoved the muzzle of his revolver through the opening and fired at him.

The ball struck him on his pistol arm, and his weapon fell to the floor.

With a cry of agony he sprang for the door and disappeared into the night.

The other bandit, left alone to face the trouble, decided that discretion was the better part of valor, and, jumping from the ladder, made for the door.

Tom fired at his legs.

The fellow uttered a howl and went limping off, which showed that he had received some kind of a wound, even if it was only a flesh one.

The boys examined the ruffian leader and found he was not dead.

He seemed to be badly wounded, though.

With considerable difficulty they lowered the wounded and unconscious bandit to the floor below, and there they left him to be found by his companions if they returned, or the soldiers, if they came that way, as they were likely to do.

Though the boys had slept a little more than two hours, they were wide awake enough now to proceed on their way, for their exciting encounter had thoroughly aroused them, and they couldn't have gone to sleep again if they had tried.

It is enough to say that after nearly two weeks of tough life as the boys reached the town of Rawlings, on the line of the Southern Pacific railroad, about ten miles north of the Mexican border line.

They were vastly different-looking boys from what they were when they had passed through that town on their way south eighteen days previously.

Then they looked spruce and natty, now they were tough and well-dressed to the tint of a Mexican, while their clothes were much the worse for wear.

Tom hastened to arrange for the transfer of the gold ore to the nearest smelter.

The stuff was pronounced to be extremely rich in gold, and they were asked many questions about where it came from.

They wouldn't give any information away, as a matter of course.

Receiving a receipt for the ore, they at once took a train north for the district where Bob's father was in charge of extensive mining operations.

Mr. Gillette was astonished at their changed appearance, still more at their stories.

After reading John Boland's autobiography, he decided that Claim No. 7 was worth investigating.

Taking the boys with him, he paid a visit to the mine, and he soon assured himself that this lost lode was really where the dead prospector had located it.

"You boys have got a fortune here," he said. "I will see that it is secured to you by authority of the Mexican government, and then I would advise you to sell out the mine to persons able to work it. I will make it my business to get you a fair price for it."

"All right, Mr. Gillette, we'll leave the matter in your hands," replied Tom.

It was nearly time now for the boys to return to New York, so they did not continue their original plan of going down the Sonora railroad to Guaymas, on the Gulf of California, as they originally intended doing.

On their way back East they stopped over at St. Louis and called on Mr. Ardsley and Dora.

They were delighted to meet the boys again, and of course Tom and Bob had a long and thrilling story to tell them of their adventures from the moment they parted from the banker and his daughter that eventful night outside the wall of the monastery of the Black Brotherhood.

The boys remained for several days as guests of the banker, and Tom made good use of the time to make himself solid with Dora.

When they parted it was with the private arrangement that they would correspond regularly, and this agreement was faithfully kept up.

Tom and Bob received nearly \$10,000 each out of the gold ore they had so laboriously rowed up the Santa Cruz River.

Later on their rights in Claim No. 7 were disposed of by Mr. Gillette to a couple of Mexican capitalists for a handsome royalty on the output of the mine.

When this royalty had panned out \$50,000, the capitalists offered to buy the mine outright for three-quarters of a million, and their offer was accepted.

Thus both Tom and Bob became rich boys, and when the former offered his heart and hand to Dora Ardsley he was accepted by both the girl and her father.

In due time they were married, and Tom went into business with Bob in New York.

They are living to-day, rich and prosperous, but they lay all their good luck to the start they received from the prospector's legacy—Claim No. 7.

Next week's issue will contain "OUT FOR BIG MONEY; OR, TOUCHING UP THE WALL STREET TRADERS."

SPECIAL NOTICE

Please give your newsdealer a standing order for your weekly copy of "FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY." The War Industries Board has asked all publishers to save waste. Newsdealers must, therefore, be informed if you intend to get a copy of this weekly every week, so they will know how many copies to order from us.

LOOK! LOOK! LOOK!

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HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

THIS LITTLE LADY WAS A BLONDE AND WEIGHED ONLY 105 POUNDS AND CLERKED IN A DEPARTMENT STORE FOR \$12 A WEEK. SHE HAD NEVER BEEN TO CHICAGO, YET SHE SANK A GERMAN U-BOAT. IS THAT FIGHTING? YOU BET IT IS!

By GUY HUBBART

Her name is Lilly Frill. She sells laces in a small department store less than 200 miles from Chicago. She had never been to Chicago. It took too much money. Her beau, one of the boys in the store, marched away to war. Lilly wept for a day or two, of course. She missed her beau. Any girl would weep.

But Lilly didn't weep long. She laid aside tears and began to fight. She fought right there in her little home town. She began to sell War-Savings Stamps, along with laces and neckwear and things. She had read that one depth bomb would shatter the biggest U-boat afloat, and she knew the U-boats were lurking for the transport that carried her beau overseas. She asked someone how much it took to manufacture a depth bomb, and when she found out she took the amount as

her share of the fighting and started out to sell War-Savings Stamps up to that amount at least.

"Money 'll stop those pirates," Lilly said to herself, "and I'm going to stop one. I am going to sell a Thrift Stamp or a War-Savings Stamp to every customer who comes my way."

Lilly Frill did it. She's doing it yet, a little girl, blonde and slender and not so very pretty. Think it over a moment, Mr. Merchant! How many Lilly Frills have you got in your store who would like to fight? You've got a good many. Help them to sell stamps to get money to crush the German army and the German U-boats. We'll win if you do.

Remember what Lilly said: "I'm going to stop one U-boat." She did—with Thrift Stamps.

RECORD W. S. S. SALES.

Receipts of \$16,431,933, July 9, from War Savings and Thrift Stamp sales were the largest of any single day since these securities were offered to the public. Sales during the first nine days of July totaled \$16,522,529.

PATRIOTISM WITHOUT HESITATION.

If our soldier boys deliberated as long over doing their duty as some of our people at home hesitate over doing theirs, the victory would be doubtful.

It is a sort of financial cowardice to hesitate to put your money in United States Government securities, and to deliberate over the wisdom and patriotism of the investment is to hesitate in support our soldiers.

LOANS TO OUR ALLIES.

The United States has now loaned to our allies \$3,091,590,000. The advances average about \$100,000,000 a month.

These loans to our allies are analogous to lending weapons to friends who are aiding you in the defense of your own home. The money is being used to defeat our enemy, to maintain armies fighting side by side with our soldiers, and fleets patrolling the same oceans with our sailors.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

This war is to be won not by one man or one thousand or one million men, or one million people. It is to be won by the united efforts of the individuals of many nations.

Every American citizen has an individual duty to

perform, an individual share of the responsibility. The more powerful and effective the American forces are the shorter will be the war, and the shorter the war the fewer lives lost, the greater the number of American soldiers who will return home victorious.

Every American who economizes in consumption of material, who increases production, who saves and lends savings to the Government, does something to help win the war.

HOLD YOUR LIBERTY BONDS.

To successfully finance the war it is necessary that owners of Liberty bonds hold their bonds if possible. Where for any good reason it is necessary for them to turn their bonds into cash they should seek the advice of their bankers.

Liberty loan bonds are very desirable investments, and crafty individuals are using various means to secure them from owners not familiar with stock values and like matters. One method is to offer to exchange for Liberty bonds stocks or bonds of doubtful organizations represented as returning a much higher income than the bonds.

There are various other methods used and likely to be used, some of the gold-brick variety and others less crude and probably within the limits of the law. All offers for Liberty bonds except money and at market value should be scrutinized carefully. The bonds are the safest of investments and have non-taxable and other valuable features.

To hold your Liberty loan bonds, if possible, is patriotic. To consult your bankers before selling them is wise.

THE STARS AND THE BARS

—OR—

THE RIVAL SCHOOLS OF ROXFORD

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER XXII (Continued).

They returned upstairs.

"What! Isn't Mr. Judd here?" cried Ran.

Tom explained.

"It may be as you think," said Ran, "but I don't know. There are no tracks on the sand which have been made since the rain. I was looking just now with the lantern. I hardly think they have been here."

"Markey probably got the time twisted," said Tom.

"Yes, but even so he couldn't have started much sooner than we did. How would he be able to sneak out of the Institute before eleven? I don't imagine that he asked permission."

"There's a whole lot in what you say," replied Tom. "Perhaps in some way your father got wind of the detectives being in the neighborhood, Hattie, and has gone away of his own accord. But in any case we must be going back, for I don't like the looks of things. To me it seems to be fixing up for something more than an ordinary storm."

Any old fisherman along the coast would have said the same thing.

The rain had ceased, and the wind now died away completely; there was a certain breathlessness about the air which was more like August than October.

The storm was "on a center," as they say in Maine.

To Tom it seemed certain that they were to catch it with renewed fury later on.

"We can't sail without wind," said Ran. "We shall have to wait."

"We will push out," replied Tom. "We will get wind enough presently. If we do not make a move we are liable to be stuck here all night, and that would never do."

They pushed the Ruby off, and got on board.

Scarcely had they done so when the wind started business again.

It was only a flaw, but it sent them flying while it lasted, for this time it was a breeze astern, and all to the good.

But when they got down by Pot Island it died out again, and they lay becalmed.

Hattie was very silent now, all her enthusiasm having passed away.

"Don't worry," said Tom. "It's all coming out right."

"It's the uncertainty," replied Hattie. "Just as I thought I saw a way out for poor father here it comes again. Will it never end?"

"Bound to! Don't you care. I am sure that the end is close at hand."

Ten minutes passed, and then came the change.

First a light puff against their cheeks, and the sail began to fill.

Then all at once there was a strange whistling sound, and the gale was upon them.

"We are in for it now!" cried Ran.

Tom said not a word.

He had all he could do to look after the boat, and he knew it.

The sky was inky black, but every now and then a flash of lightning broke the darkness.

Every now and again the sea broke over them.

Tom began to wish that he had stopped on the island, but there was no turning back now.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BLOWN OUT TO SEA.

"Hark! Did you hear it then? There it goes again!"

Ran had to shout to make himself heard.

The Ruby was past Pot Island and the cry which had reached Ran's ears seemed to come from that direction.

Suddenly the whole heavens were lighted by a flash of lightning, and while it lasted all hands were treated to a startling sight.

Directly ahead of them was an overturned boat, clinging to the keep of which they saw a man!

"Look! Look!" roared Ran.

"Oh, my goodness! What can we ever do to save him!" screamed Hattie.

And then the thunder came rashing peal upon peal.

What indeed?

To do anything seemed next to impossible.

But Tom Black was all there!

During that brief instant of light the brave boy got his bearings, and made up his mind how to act.

Around jibed the sheet, and Tom stood in a little—it was all he could do.

"Stand ready to grab him, Ran!" he shouted. "Catch him by the collar or by the hair! Look out now that he don't drag you overboard or upset us. Hattie, crowd over all you can! Hold tight on to Ran."

His words were almost lost on the wind.

Ran sat ready, peering out into the darkness.

"It's up to you, Ran!" shouted Tom. "It can only be a matter of a few seconds, now."

The time had come.

Suddenly Ran made a grab at something.

The next they knew he was holding someone by the hair.

"Help! Save me! Oh, oh!" that someone was yelling.

Ran threw himself over until he almost lay across the thwarts, and the rescued one, seizing the gun-whale, climbed into the boat, very nearly sending them all to their death in the operation.

Who was it?

It was too dark to distinguish faces.

The rescued one sank down in the bottom of the boat all in a heap; he was panting like a dog.

"Hello! Who are you?" cried Ran.

"I—I am one of Professor Steel's boys," was the reply.

And then they knew him.

The voice was Joe White's.

Nobody answered.

They knew that as yet he could not have recognized them, for it was simply impossible to see a thing.

"Take hold here, Ran!" cried Tom. "I must take in another reef."

Ran took the tiller and Tom got busy with the halyards.

He had the sail half down when there came a rush of wind which laid everything that had gone before it in the shade.

The mast snapped like a stick of candy.

The next they knew the sail was flapping in the water, and the Ruby was lying on her side.

It was a ticklish moment.

But Tom was right on the job.

Whipping out his knife, he cut away the ropes and the Ruby righted.

Then came the rain!

It struck them in blinding sheets, and would have drenched them to the skin but for their waterproof coats; but even as it was they got wet enough.

"Bail! Bail!" bawled Tom.

Ran got the can, and rushed it for all he was worth.

Conversation was impossible.

Tom was in despair.

He knew that they were being blown out to sea, and nothing that he could do could possibly prevent it.

For more than half an hour this state of things

lasted, and then this singular storm, which was long to be remembered on the Maine coast, took another turn.

The rain ceased as suddenly as it had come.

The next they knew the clouds had all cleared away, and the moon shone out at her full.

But the wind held on for some time after that, although it had now shifted to the northwest, and still, owing to the contour of the coast at this point, it continued to blow them out to sea; but it didn't blow so hard, and now for the first time they could make themselves heard.

"Tom, what is going to happen to us?" demanded Hattie, being the first to break the long silence.

"Hard to tell," was the reply, "but I am hoping for the best."

"We ought to hit the coast again after we pass Rockland if this wind holds," said Ran.

"I am thinking of that," replied Tom.

"And now, Joe White," he added, "what have you got to say for yourself?"

Joe, who had got up on the edge of the cockpit, had never uttered a word.

"What can I say?" he answered in a different tone from anything Tom had ever heard him use. "I am here, and Ran Jones saved my life, which was something I did not deserve."

And this last admission came upon them all as a surprise.

"You can thank Tom for saving your life," said Ran. "I merely pulled you in; you would have been a dead duck now all right only for the way he handled the boat."

"I suppose that is so. I would have deserved it if I had drowned. I thank you both."

He had disarmed them all.

"But I suppose you don't know what I mean," continued Joe bitterly. "You don't know what a mean, contemptible fellow I am. I didn't realize it myself until I was face to face with death. Then it all came to me. If we ever do get out of this snap alive I hope I shall live to some better purpose than I have done. I know what I am now."

For a few minutes all were silent.

This was not the same old Joe.

A new and better spirit seemed to have taken possession of the leader of the Bars.

Tom broke the painful silence.

"I'll tell you frankly, White, that we know more than you think we do," he said, "and we may as well come to an understanding. Your conversation at Fort Campbell was overheard and reported to me. That's why we are here."

"I supposed it must be something of the sort," replied Joe. "Where is Mr. Judd, may I ask?"

"You have no right to ask," flashed Hattie. "You have betrayed my poor father twice for money, and we know it. You are——"

"Hold on! Hold only!" broke in Tom. "If Joe has repented give him a show."

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

FISH BREAD USED IN NORWAY.

Fish bread is the latest product of the war, and it is said by those who have eaten it to be palatable and nourishing. The Royal Norwegian Provisions Department, which in Norway fulfills some of the functions of our own Food Administration here, has officially announced that recent experiments at Bergen to produce bread containing 20 per cent. fish roe have been successful. Machinery for the preparation of a flour made from cod roe, which will be mixed with bread grain, will be installed to increase the bread rations in Norway.

MAKES CITY FARMING PAY.

Clifford Zetterberg, a teacher of Greensburg, Ind., is putting into practice some of the intensive farming plans he has been teaching, and at a considerable profit.

A crop of early peas, raised on four city lots, two-thirds of an acre, has been sold for \$170, and now the ground is available for late beans. The pea crop aggregated 1,700 pounds and was sold at from 9 to 12 cents a pound. Zetterberg says if the conditions are propitious the bean crop will earn him equally as much money. He is now working out a plan to protect his crops against dry weather and will irrigate the ground from wells he has sunk.

CIGAR MADE MONEY.

A \$1 bill rolled in the shape of a cigar and wrapped with a cigar band camouflaged one of the gifts received by the Red Cross Salvage Department at their new location, No. 515 Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis, Minn., recently.

A workingman presented the gift. He was dressed in overalls and there was a reserved dignity in his approach to Mrs. T. S. Buttles, to whom he presented the gift. He wanted to do something for the new shop, he said, and left without giving his name. He had been gone some time when the "cigar" was opened and the shop received its surprise.

Five \$20 bills were carefully rolled inside the \$1 bill.

BOLD CHICAGO BANDITS GET GEMS WORTH \$20,000.

Four men entered the Sandock Jewelry Company's store at 63d and Halsted Streets, Chicago, the other morning when Louis Sandock, a young brother of the owner, was alone. Passing on the sidewalk was a continuous crowd of busy people.

Drawing revolvers the men made Sandock a prisoner and locked him in a back closet under one man as guard. The others threw diamonds and jewelry into bags, opened the safe and riddled it. While they were at work, Bertha Sandock, eighteen years old,

entered. One of the men seized her, but despite his command for silence she screamed. The robbers struck her and carried her unconscious into a back room.

They proceeded until almost everything was taken, then walked out, stepped into a waiting automobile and escaped. Miss Sandock recovered in five minutes and released her brother. He said the robbers had taken jewelry valued at \$30,500.

GERMAN DESERTERS AID AMERICANS IN LORRAINE.

German soldiers who have deserted into the American lines of the Lorraine front have made disclosures indicating that news of the great American effort is slowly filtering into some sections of the German army, despite the official effort to belittle American participation in the war. One prisoner said he had heard that there were only 200,000 Americans in France. Others, however, declared they knew the figure totaled 900,000, the majority of whom were brought to France "for other purposes."

From the deserters it was learned also that the three Landwehr groups in Germany had been gone over with a fine-tooth comb for fresh material to throw on the western front.

On their own initiative the deserters have enabled the Americans to establish not only the exact makeup of the enemy opposite them, but to keep track of the shifts on the other side.

AIRPLANES NEED CASTOR OIL AND SCOUTS ARE GROWING IT.

The Boy Scouts of America are also raising the castor oil bean. This is by Government request.

Their enthusiasm in increasing the available amount of castor oil in the country was awakened when it was found that the Government needed it for the Army airplanes, which some day will be flying by thousands over the German lines.

W. W. Stockbridge of the Department of Agriculture says it is hoped to secure a large crop of castor oil beans, to be used in the production of oil necessary for the airplane service.

Castor oil appears to be the most satisfactory lubricant which has yet been found for certain types of airplane engines, and for this reason the War Department finds it necessary to secure much larger supplies of castor oil than have hitherto been available.

The Boy Scouts are interested in the castor bean plant because of the great service which it can render to our aviators, and are already confident of producing a large crop.

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

ARRESTED FOR BICYCLE THEFTS.

Frederick Dudo, nineteen years old, who gave his address as 195 Clifton Place, Brooklyn, N. Y., was arrested the other night by Detectives Myers and Fitzpatrick, of the Prospect Park station, Brooklyn, charged with larceny. He is alleged by the police to have stolen sixty bicycles from boys in the Flatbush section. The police also say Dudo, who was in the uniform of a United States soldier, is wanted at Hazelhurst aviation field, Long Island, for theft.

LARGEST SHOW WINDOW.

What is believed to be the largest "show window" in the world is that just completed at Great Lakes, Ill., under the direction of Capt. William A. Moffett. It is 1,000 feet long and is to be used for exhibition purposes by Uncle Sam's finest man-o'-wars-men.

It is the big open field between the electric railway and Camp Dewey and capable of furnishing enough room for 10,000 sailors to drill at one time. Passengers on trains passing by are treated to a sight of battalions at drill and the strains of martial music are almost continuous from one or another of the many detachments of the great navy band.

THE TAPIR.

Even to this day the exact position of the tapir in the animal kingdom does not seem to be very well established. Naturalists a century ago classified it as a "pachyderm," together with the hog, the horse and the elephant.

This was really funny, inasmuch as these three beasts belong to different generations. Besides, says the Public Ledger, man ought surely to have been included as a "thick-skinned animal and a non-chewer of the cud"—such being the accepted definition of a pachyderm.

Goldsmith, in his "Animated Nature," says that the tapir "may be considered as the hippopotamus of the New World." More commonly it has been regarded as a giant species of pig. But science nowadays is inclined to look upon the animal as a New World representative of the elephant.

It is a mild, harmless, sluggish, stupid creature, with a snout that is in effect a short trunk. Brownish gray in color when full grown, it is in infancy adorned with conspicuous stripes and splotches of white.

LISTS OF SHOPS DISCRIMINATING AGAINST SOLDIERS TO BE POSTED

The Secretary of War has made the following statement:

My attention having been called to instances of discrimination against soldiers in the prices charged

in retail stores, I directed a nationwide inquiry into this subject, with the following results:

At most places no discrimination was found. At many points there is a more or less marked tendency to give discounts to soldiers. Instances of discrimination were found, though, as a rule, not among the best class of dealers. Apparently the most frequent discriminations occur in articles of necessity for officers. The results of the examination which are before me show identical articles sold to civilians at one price and to soldiers at a high price, the differences sometimes being as great as 50 per cent. against the soldier.

Conduct of this kind can not continue, I think, in any community in this country, if brought to the attention of the people there. I have accordingly directed by general order each camp and post commander in the United States to cause from time to time fresh examinations into this matter, and to post on the bulletin board for the information of all soldiers the names of such shops and dealers as are found discriminating against soldiers and officers; and to hand to the president of the chamber of commerce in each city, and to the editors of the local newspapers, copies of such lists.

CHANNEL TUNNEL GETS NEW BOOST.

Strong support for the English channel tunnel scheme from the French and Italian delegates was voiced recently at the International Parliamentary Conference in London. A resolution in favor of constructing the tunnel was adopted unanimously.

It was estimated by the sponsors of the resolution that the passenger traffic from France alone will be 3,000,000 persons annually instead of the 100,000 that traveled by steamer before the war. The probable passenger and freight traffic between Great Britain and the Continent was figured at a profit of \$5,600,000, or seven per cent on the tunnel company's capital of \$80,000,000.

The tunnel, which should be completed within five years after begun, will be worked, ventilated and pumped by electricity supplied from a power station in Kent, possibly ten miles or more inland. It was suggested that the tunnel should be maintained under the authority of the War Office, and a dip in the level of the rails forming a water-lock, so in case of emergency the tunnel could be flooded from floor to roof for a mile, and would be under control of the commandants at Dover Castle and neighboring forts.

It could be protected from enemy submarines, depth bombs or mines by a covering of the chalk bed of the channel of a minimum thickness of 100 feet. The water depth above the tunnel would at no vulnerable point be less than 180 feet.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

HONEY IS A GOOD SUBSTITUTE FOR SUGAR.

With plenty of honey for ordinary table use a great amount of sugar can be saved for other essentials, says C. E. Sanborn, entomologist of the Agricultural and Mechanical College, and he advises that bee culture be expanded in Oklahoma as a solution of the sugar problem.

"With necessary attention a crop of honey can be grown, harvested and disposed of before a crop that can be made into sugar is really in harvest," he says. The honey crop can be manufactured at home, it is argued, and it can take the place of many things for which sugar is used.

SIMPLE WAY TO DISTINGUISH IRON FROM STEEL.

The repairer of machinery often has to select pieces of metal from the scrap heap to make repairs on various machines, and is at a loss to know whether the metal he has selected is iron or steel. By the following method wrought iron, cast iron and mild steel are easily distinguished from each other. File a bright spot on the metal and place a drop of nitric acid on the metal and leave for a few minutes.

The spot will appear ash-gray on wrought iron, brownish-black on mild steel and a deep black on cast iron.

A WISE BEAR.

According to the stories told by Arctic explorers and whalers, polar bears—like many other animals of the Far North that have a hard time finding food—show an unusual reasoning faculty.

A whaler tells of planning to capture a polar bear by means of a slipnoose arranged about a bait. The noose caught one of the bear's paws, but the animal worked itself loose and carried away the bait. The sailor set the noose again, but this time the bear pushed the rope away before venturing near the bait. The third time the sailor covered the noose with snow, but the bear scraped about till he found the rope and again dragged it to one side. The fourth time the sailor put the bait in the bottom of a hole so the bear would have to crawl partly into it. Then he put the noose entirely around the hole and covered it with snow. This did not deceive the bear, however, as the animal carefully uncovered the rope, knocked it aside and carried off the bait. Then the sailor gave up.

Another story tells of a polar bear's cleverness in catching a seal. The seal had climbed through a hole in the ice, but was keeping near the edge in order to be able to plunge in at the approach of danger. The bear saw the seal from a distance and knew that there was no chance to steal across the ice and

attack its prey. Accordingly the bear entered the water through another hole a considerable distance away, swam under the ice to the hole through which the seal had emerged and seized the luckless animal, which naturally was taken entirely by surprise.

FLOWERS MAKE SUGAR.

A flower is a sugar factory on a tiny scale. It makes sugar for the purpose of attracting sweet-loving insects, which, thus lured, carry pollen from blossom to blossom, and thereby accomplish the cross-fertilization of plants.

Some kinds of flowers secrete much more sugar than other kinds; the quality secreted is also influenced by climate.

The honeysuckle is a familiar example of high production in sugar.

Try, suggests the Public Ledger, to think of the total quantity of nectar produced by all the flowers that bloom within the limits of the United States in a single summer. It is almost beyond the grasp of the human mind.

To put a definite figure on it is obviously impossible. But the experts of the Department of Agriculture venture the estimate that its actual content of sugar must far exceed the total of sugar (cane, beet and other) consumed by the people of this country in a year.

There is only one known agency by which the sugar output of the flowers can be harvested. That agency is the honey bee, and (as such things ordinarily are reckoned) it is not very efficient.

The average bee colony consumes for its own maintenance about 400 pounds of honey per annum. Its surplus (which is what comes to the beekeeper) is perhaps fifty pounds. A well-managed apiary of 100 colonies, gathering twenty-two and one-half tons of honey, may yield a net crop of two and a half tons.

There you have it. The margin of profitable production is not great. Yet there is a fair return to be obtained from beekeeping, well conducted.

The honey bee gathers her sweets from an area within two miles of the hive. The fact that 100 colonies of the busy insects can find inside of such a radius nectar enough to yield twenty-two and one-half tons of the concentrated sugar product we call honey gives an idea of the enormous quantity of sugar produced by flowers in, let us say, the smallest State of the Union, Rhode Island.

And yet the annual honey crop of the United States is not more than 250,000,000 pounds—a small fraction of what it ought to be. The beekeeping industry, relatively speaking, is neglected in this country; and thereby an important source of sugar production lacks adequate development.

FROM ALL POINTS

GIRLS PROUD TO BLACK SHOES.

We are proud to release men for active war service," said one of the girls who have taken over a shoe blacking stand in Yakima, Wash. The two young women declare the work is not hard, and, although they do not exactly like the name "boot-black," they are willing to do their share to help win the war. Their stand is liberally patronized.

DEEPEST LAKE.

A lake known as the "Great Sunken Lake" is reported to be the deepest lake in this country, and perhaps in the whole world. Located in the valley of the Cascade Mountains, about seventy miles north of Jacksonville, Ore., this lake, which is about fifteen miles long and four miles wide, is so deep that its depth cannot be measured. It is situated so far below the crest of the mountains that winds cannot reach it, and its surface is like a sheet of glass. It is sometimes called the Lake of Mystery."

MAN WITH BROKEN NECK GETS MARRIED.

Miss Alice Faulks of Annandale, N. J., and Henry B. Bowlby of Lebanon, N. J., were married at a private hospital at Easton, Pa.

Five weeks ago Mr. Bowlby met with an accident in which he dislocated his spinal cord at the neck. Since then his head and neck have rested in a mold.

The young couple had decided several months ago to be married and decided not to postpone the wedding. The bridegroom is not yet out of danger.

ECLIPSE RESTORES ASTRONOMER'S EYESIGHT.

The happiest man in Southern California to-day is G. Frank Otis, a former astronomer.

Despite the fact that he was practically blind, Otis, accompanied by a number of other astronomers, went to Selma, Cal., in the hope of viewing the recent eclipse of the sun. He was overjoyed when he was able to view the sun's corona during the eclipse.

His sight has been gradually improving since that date.

GIRL DOES FARM WORK.

Miss Nancy Fehring, aged twenty, living four miles southeast of Winchester, Ind., has set the pace for the girls of Indiana in the way of doing a man's work. This spring she has planted fourteen acres in corn, sowed seventeen acres in oats and has done the chores on her mother's farm. Her father died a few years ago and since that time the young woman has managed the farm until this year. Being unable to hire help, she is now doing the actual farming herself.

ESKIMOS HELP RED CROSS.

The world war has even extended to the polar regions and jarred the Eskimo into making some comforts for soldiers, it was learned through William T. Lopp, chief of the Alaskan division of the Bureau of Education.

"The Eskimos raise money by selling furs, cutting ivory and longshoring for ships that visit their isolated homes," said Mr. Lopp, who has just reached Washington from Alaska.

"One village which has been saving up for years for a sawmill and had accumulated \$130, gave \$100 of its scanty hoard," he added, to indicate the way the peaceful Eskimo is sacrificing for the savage white man.

COST OF STEEL, WOODEN AND CONCRETE SHIPS.

The estimated cost of building a wooden ship is about \$165 a ton complete, and that of building a steel ship about \$180 to \$220 a ton complete. The estimated cost of concrete ships is between \$100 and \$110 a ton complete. The difference is brought about by the saving in equipment, time, labor and material. Compared to steel materials, the saving by the use of concrete often exceeds fifty to fifty-five per cent. In concrete there is also no waste of material; whereas it is reckoned that the weight of steel ordered for building a steel ship is perhaps ten per cent greater than that of the steel which is actually used in construction. This loss in steel comes from waste in cuts of plates, angles, rivet holes and in other adjustments.

SWINGING TARGET IS NOT DIFFICULT TO HIT.

It is a strange thing that the novice will almost invariably try to hit the bull's-eye of a swinging target when it is at the center or in the lowest position. This is decidedly the incorrect method, and the expert knows better. He knows that the time to shoot is at the end of the swing. In fact, any one will arrive ultimately at the same conclusion, for a little thought will convince him that a target is the most easily hit when at a standstill, or at the end of a vibration.

The moving target as a rule has the largest bull's-eye, and is often one of the easiest to strike, if you happen to know how.

Simply aim at the point where the center of the target stops and wait till it returns. Then, bang! Your friend gives one of those sickly smiles and pays for the shots. Then he wastes another quarter trying to do something that he does not comprehend. "Simple if you only know how."

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

NEW YORK, AUGUST 23, 1918.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

A live deer was caught the other day in Hazlewood, a suburb of Anderson, Ind. The deer escaped from the Weslow Deer Farm. When seen in Hazlewood it was run down by a crowd of men and boys.

For absenting himself without leave and stealing a motorcycle, Horace F. Cote, a soldier in Camp Devens, was sentenced the other day to ten years in the Federal Penitentiary at Atlanta. He was arrested at Binghamton, N. Y.

The Board of Trustees of the town of Sellersburg, Ind., has turned over the town jail to the Girls' Canning Club. The first afternoon of the club's activities was devoted to canning rhubarb. The place proved as satisfactory for that purpose as for canning the "stews" for former days.

Convivial Wladislaw Giera, Springfield, Mass., had actual cold water dashed on his hopes of a prolonged wet spell. Also he was fined \$10 in police court for being intoxicated and stealing a barrel of supposed whisky from the rear of a saloon. Wladislaw said he didn't mind the disgrace, but that he was terribly disappointed when he got the barrel home and found it contained nothing but water.

Experts have estimated that one rat will consume forty to fifty pounds of food in a year. It has also been figured that it requires the continuous work of about 150,000 men with farms, agricultural implements, and other equipments to supply the food-stuffs destroyed annually by rats in the United States. In addition, rats destroy other property, mainly of agricultural origin, the production of which requires the work of about 50,000 men. This gives a total of 200,000 men whose economic output is devoted solely to feeding and otherwise providing for rats.

The War Department states that early in June the production of rifles for the Army will exceed 1,500,-

000, divided as follows: Of the new modified Enfields, 1,140,595; of the Springfields, 176,796; rifles made for Russia but not delivered to her, 251,270. Also there is the equivalent of 100,000 Enfields and 100,000 Springfields made up in spare parts. The Russian rifles are being used for training purposes and for the equipment of the Home Guards, and all the rest of the guns go into the hands of the soldiers destined for service in Europe. In addition to the rifles made since war began, 600,000 Springfields, a most excellent weapon, are in use. About one-half the soldiers in an army carry rifles, hence the War Department has rifles for an army of 2,000,000 men, allowing wastage for one year.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"Did the prisoner offer any resistance?" "Only a dollar, Your Honor, and I wouldn't take it."

"Clinker—Did I understand you to say that there is nearly always something broke about your motor car? Blinker—Yes. Clinker—What is it, as a rule? Blinker—Me.

Bachelor (sadly)—I dreamed last night that I was married. The alarm clock woke me. Benidict (more sadly)—I dreamed last night that I was single. The twins woke me.

"Going to make a garden this year?" "No, I have boarded grubs, worms and insects long enough. "Huh?" "I'll keep chickens this year and let the aforesaid grubs, worms and insects board them."

"How often have I told you not to ask for a second helping of desert?" said Tommy's mother. "I was only doin' what they told me in Sunday school," replied the boy. "Well, Tommy! What do you mean?" "Well, the Golden Text to-day was 'Ask, and you shall receive,' and I'm askin', ain't I?"

"For ten years," said the new boarder, "my habits were as regular as clock-work. I rose on the stroke of six, and half an hour later was at breakfast; at seven I was at work; dined at one; had supper at six, and was in bed at nine-thirty. Ate only plain food, and hadn't a day's illness all the time." "Dear me!" said a hearer, in sympathetic tones; "and what were you in for?"

A carpenter sent to make some repairs to a private house, entered the apartment of the lady of the house with his mate. "Jane," the lady called to her servant, "see that my jewel-case is locked at once." The carpenter understood. He removed his watch and chain from his waistcoat pocket with a significant air, and handed them to his mate. "Bill," he remarked, "take them right back to the shop. It seems that this house ain't safe."

SOLD BY HIS SWEETHEART

By Colonel Ralph Fenton

My friend Thompson, the English Scotland Yard detective, whom I have mentioned before, paid me a visit lately, and he told me one of his remarkable adventures while smoking our pipes together.

Some twenty years ago, on a cold winter's night, Thompson was sent down to the city of Birmingham, from the head office in London, with instructions to work up some daring burglaries lately committed in the former city.

The principal sufferer at Birmingham was an old officer who had served in India, and who had made a large fortune there.

When Thompson arrived at Birmingham he was received by Colonel Crandall as an old merchant friend from London, and not even a hint was given as to the nature of his business at the hospitable mansion.

"I can't make out for the life of me," commenced the old colonel, "how the robbery could have been effected. There wasn't a single window or door broken open, yet all my plate, jewels and money were whipped away as if by magic; and, what is the worst of it, every guest in my house suffered as well."

"Do you suspect any of the servants?" asked the detective.

"I would as soon suspect my own daughter. All of the servants have been with me for years, and I will swear to their honesty; and I tell you I'm not easily deceived."

"Of course it would be an insult to ask you if you think it possible that any of your guests would be the burglar."

"It would be an insult. My guests are all gentlemen."

"You are acquainted with the other three gentlemen whose houses have been robbed in a similar manner?"

"Oh, most assuredly. They are all particular friends of mine."

"Then it will be necessary for you to introduce me to their houses."

"Certainly I will, Mr.——"

"Call me Larkin, if you please, while I am your guest."

The detective was not many hours in the colonel's mansion before he discovered that a charming daughter was the principal attraction there—for the bachelors, at least.

Lucy Crandall was a splendid girl in every way, not to speak of the large fortune she would receive from her wealthy father.

Among the guests who first attracted the detective's attention was a certain Captain O'Connor, a rollicking Irish soldier, who had served in India under Colonel Crandall.

It was whispered in the house that the colonel was

perfectly willing to intrust his daughter to O'Connor's keeping for life, if Lucy would accept him as her husband.

The young lady was somewhat of a coquette, however, and it was said that she was partial to her cousin, Frank Crandall, a young man who was studying for the ministry, but who spent most of his time at Crandall Hall.

The detective took as much of a dislike to Captain O'Connor as he did a liking for the young student, and he mentally wished that the latter would outstrip the former in the race for the beautiful heiress.

On the third evening, as the detective was sitting in the drawing-room listening to Lucy singing, he saw the reflection of a female face in the glass in front of him.

"What's this?" said the detective to himself, as he watched the face peering in at the back window. "It is not one of the housemaids, as I know them all. I must stroll out and investigate a little."

When he reached the back of the house, he saw the strange woman hurrying away toward a row of shrubbery skirting the lawn in the rear of the house.

The woman was soon on the main road leading into the city, and the detective continued to follow her until she entered a tavern on the outskirts, which was a well-known resort of boozers and bad characters of the neighborhood.

After locating the woman, the detective hastened back to the mansion, put on a suit of rough clothes and sallied out again.

When he entered the barroom was full to overflowing, as a "free-and-easy" was in full blast, it being Saturday night.

On looking up at the waitress, he recognized the face of the woman who was spying in at the mansion window.

"Sallie is very glum to-night," remarked a fellow near the detective.

"That's because that blasted Irish captain ain't here," replied another.

As the man spoke Captain O'Connor and Frank Crandall entered.

A special table had been reserved for them, and Sallie was soon at their side, her face beaming with smiles as she asked:

"What is your pleasure, gentlemen?"

"If I had my pleasure, be the holy power, but I'd have a taste of your own sweet lips, my darling," responded the gay Irish captain. "As it is, I'll have to be content with a bowl of good hot punch. What's yours, Frank?"

"I'll share the punch with you."

The detective had taken good care to disguise his features before leaving the mansion, and so he was not noticed by his two fellow guests.

But there was one man in the room who did recognize Thompson, and that man was a famous London burglar named Jack Edwards, who had a bad grudge against him.

The first intimation the detective had of the feel-

ing against him was when a great burly fellow approached him, saying:

"Blast my eyes if I don't believe you're a sneaking spy, and I can wallop the very life out of you."

The burly fellow made a blow at the detective, but the latter parried it, sending out his left at the same time, and knocking the fellow flat on the floor.

The next instant all was uproar and confusion, and at least half a dozen roughs sprang at the disguised man.

"Blood-an'-'ouns! is this what you call English fair play? Six upon one! Shame! shame on you, boys! Here's to give a hand to ye, my brave fellow!"

It was Captain O'Connor who spoke, and as he uttered the protest he dashed in among the roughs, striking right and left, and sending his man down at every muscular blow of his arm.

While the Irish captain was doing his work in splendid style, the English detective was not idle.

In less than two minutes they had cleared a space around them.

"Come here and take a glass with us," cried Captain O'Connor, addressing the detective. "And 'tis I'd like to see the man who'll say boo to you again this blessed night."

On his way back to the mansion, he said to himself:

"Captain O'Connor is a brave man, but I'm afraid he's in league with Edwards and his pals. I'll have to watch him closely. I think he's doomed."

While the detective was sleeping that night two men entered the bedroom noiselessly.

One of them advanced to the bedside, and held a moistened handkerchief to the sleeper's nose, while they proceeded to appropriate his watch and his purse.

In the morning it was discovered that another extensive raid had been made in the mansion, and that Lucy Crandall was the principal victim.

When the detective was able to be up and around again, he found that Captain O'Connor and Frank Crandall were the only guests remaining in the house. Frank Crandall drew him into a secluded corner, saying:

"I want to speak to you on a very delicate subject."

"About the robbery?"

"Yes, about the robbery. Have you any suspicions as to who the culprit is?"

"I have."

"And so have I. I did not dare to speak to my uncle on the subject, but I will be plain with you. Captain O'Connor is one of the robbers. I am certain of it."

"What proof have you?"

"On the night of the last robbery I was not fast asleep, when I heard a slight noise in my bedroom. When I opened my eyes I saw a tall man and a low-sized, stout man near the door, and they had crape on their faces. Before I could utter a word the tall man sprang on me and seized me by the throat, and then I became unconscious."

"The fellow must be arrested at once."

"To be sure; but we must spare uncle the disgrace of arresting him in the mansion here. I understand from him that he is going up to London to-morrow. Could you not go up ahead and arrest him there?"

Before leaving Birmingham the detective set two of the local detectives to watch the captain.

On the morning after his arrival in London the detective received the following dispatch by telegraph:

"Your man is on the train due at London at 3 p. m."

Soon after the arrival of the train the gallant captain sauntered into the place, holding a valise in one hand, while the other, which was stuck in his overcoat pocket, grasped a heavy walking-stick. Before the captain could be seated, the detective arose, saying:

"Captain O'Connor, I have an unpleasant duty to perform. You are my prisoner."

"The mischief you say. What in the name of blazes is the trouble?"

The captain let fly with his right hand as he spoke, and knocked the detective clear off his pins.

The Irish gentleman was overpowered, however, after a very severe struggle.

When he was dragged before the magistrate, the charge was made against him by the detective and Frank Crandall.

When the captain's valise was opened, and some of Lucy's jewelry was taken out, he grew quite furious altogether.

On the night of their return to Birmingham, the detective and Frank were seated in the drawing-room with Lucy and her father.

They had been speaking of the damning evidence against the prisoner, when Lucy gave expression to her feelings in a loud voice, saying:

"I care not what the evidence may be, I'll never believe that Captain O'Connor could be such a base wretch."

"And you are right, young lady," cried a voice behind them, as the window was opened and in sprang Sallie, the waitress at the tavern.

"What do you want here, young woman?" demanded the colonel.

"I want to denounce a base villain, and there he stands."

And the young woman pointed at Frank Crandall.

"I mean to say—and I can prove what I say—that your nephew there is the real robber, and not Captain O'Connor, who is a brave, generous gentleman. Do you know that ring, Miss Crandall?"

Lucy recognized the diamond ring presented to her by her father.

"That crawling scoundrel there gave me that ring," cried the girl. "I was his sweetheart, and he swore he'd make me his wife; and now he comes here a-courting of you. Arrest that hound, officer!"

Three weeks after, Lucy became Mrs. Captain O'Connor; and on the same day Frank and Jack Edwards were sentenced for twenty years' imprisonment.

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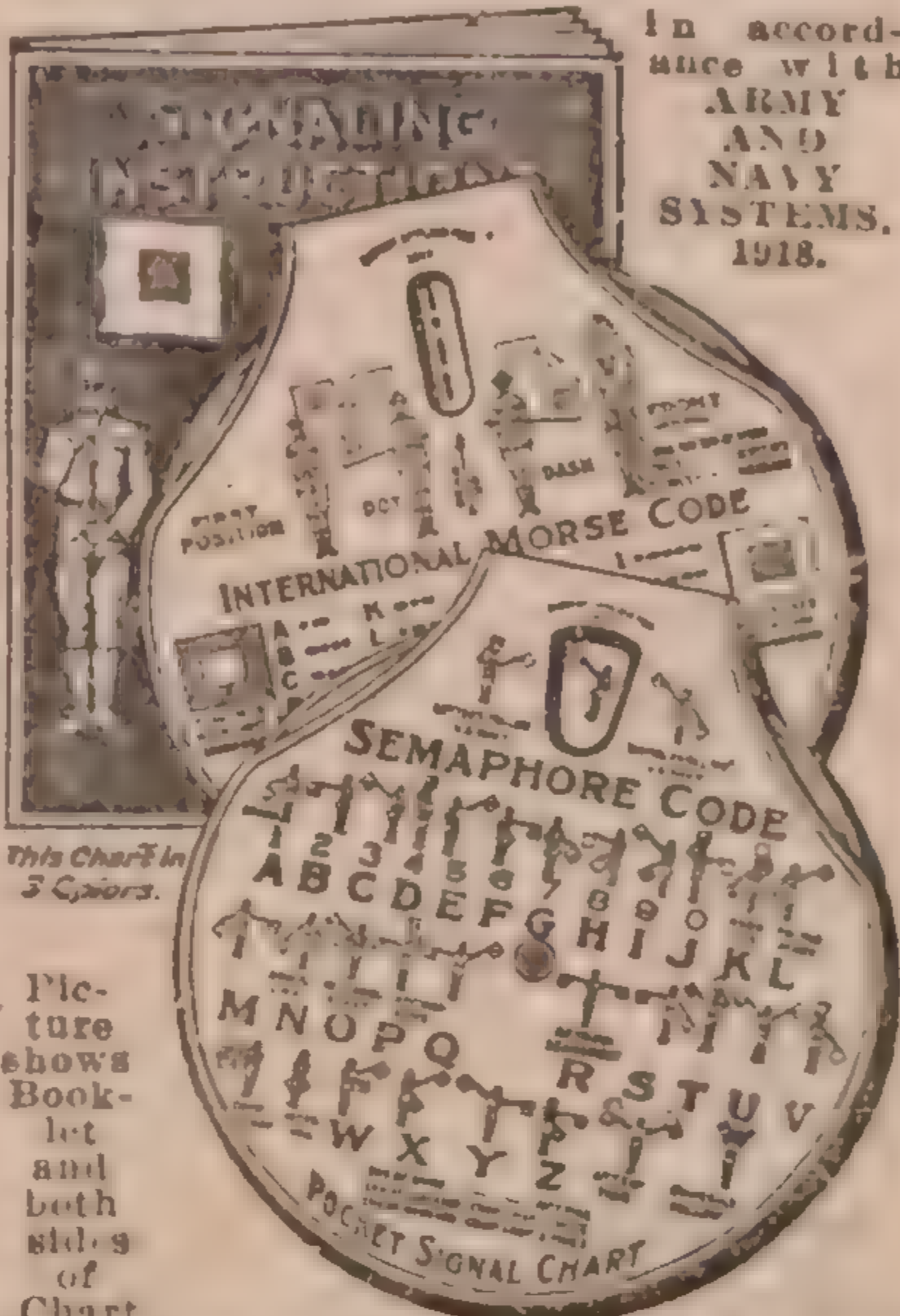
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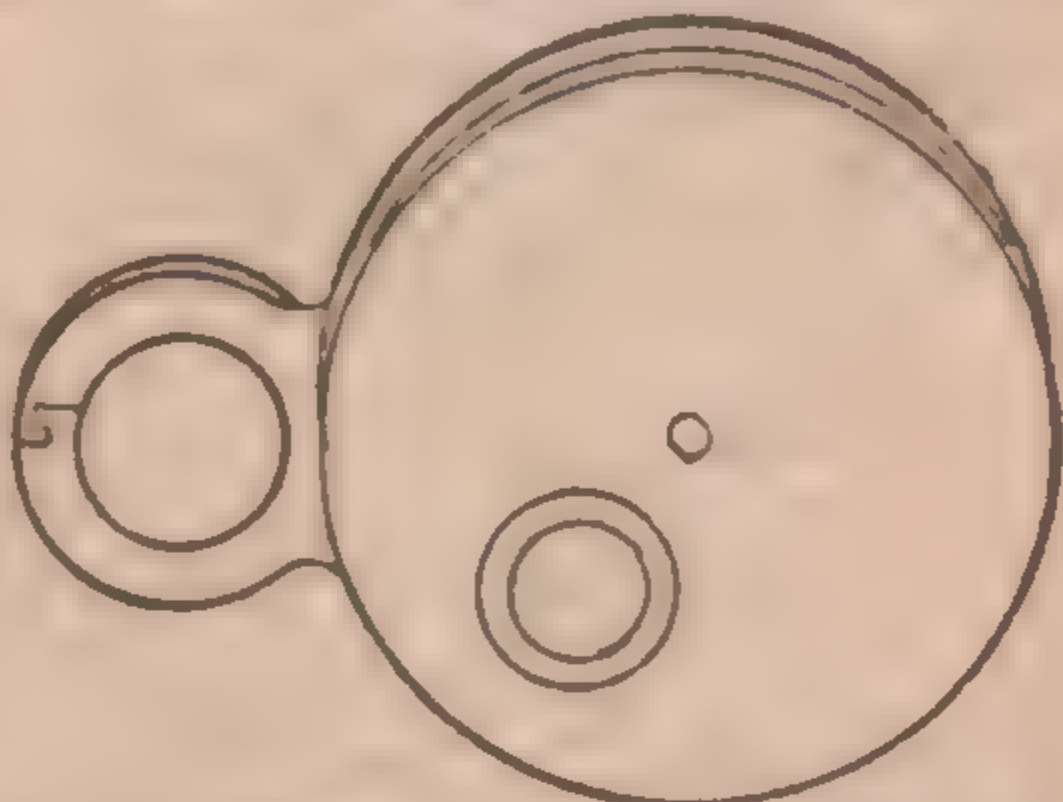
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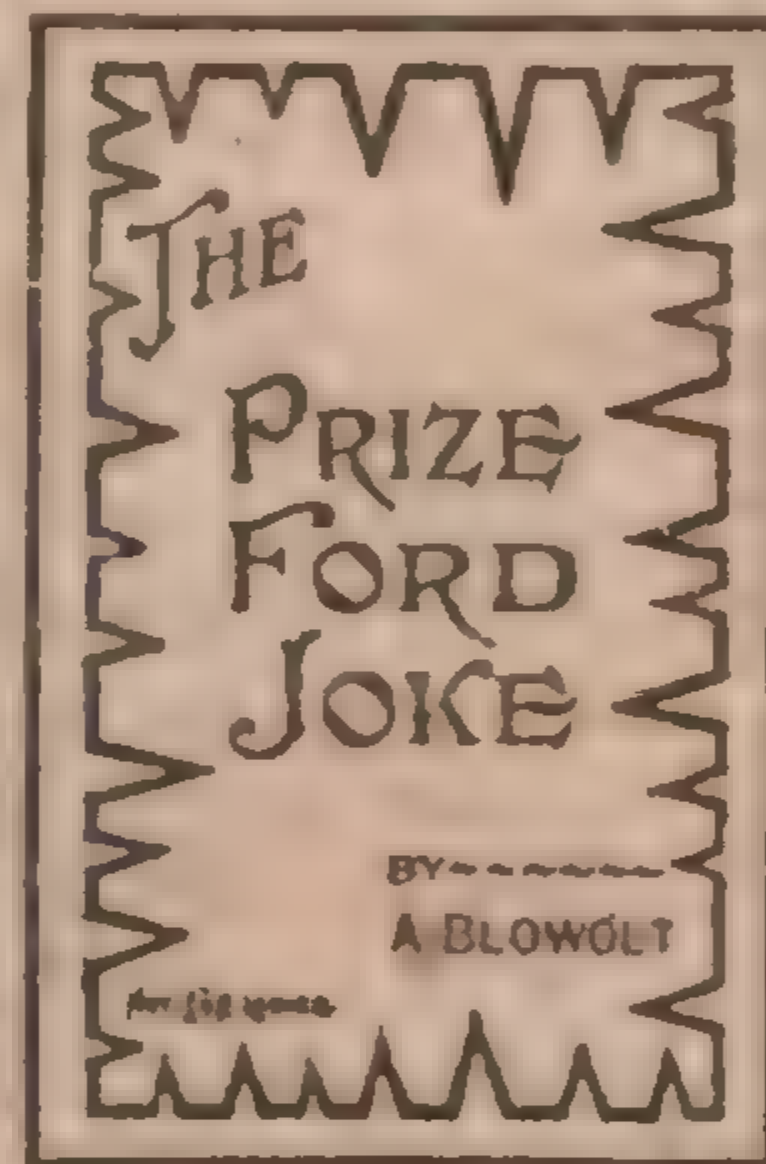
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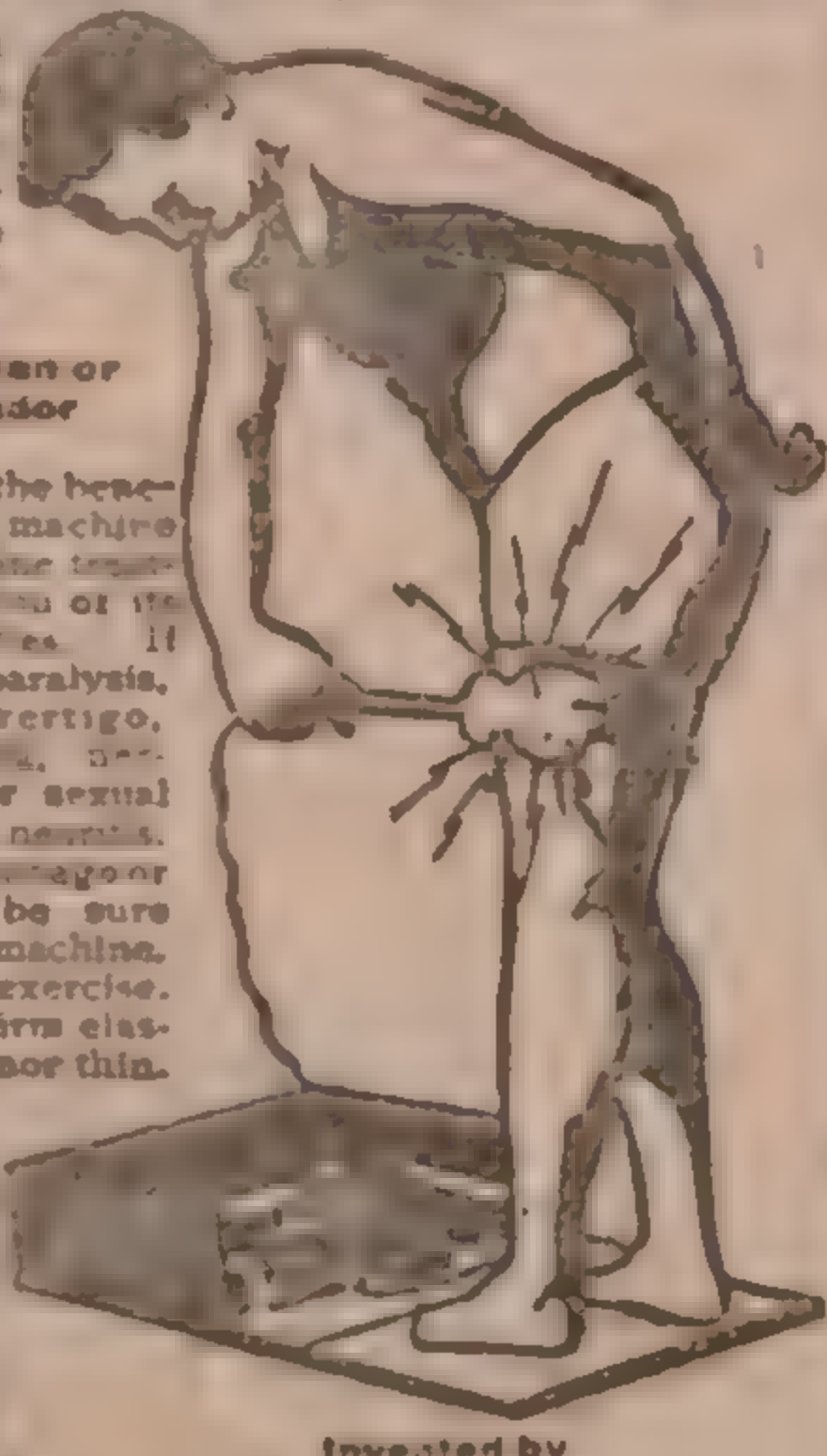
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REDUCE WEIGHT HAPPILY. If you are too fat, send for interesting book telling the best way to become slimmer, healthier and beautiful. Sent in plain wrapper. **Dr. J. H. Tomke, 517 Central Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio.**

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Get a small box of Oil of Korein capsules at the drug store; follow directions. If you wish a small, handsome chin and attractive figure.

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Unless you have been exceptionally careful the cigarette habit has a hold which you cannot shake off by will power.

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Are you troubled with sleeplessness at night and dullness in the morning until you have doped yourself with the nicotine of cigarettes or pipe, or chewing tobacco? They're all the same, you know.

Give your poison-saturated body, from your pale yellowish skin right into your pale yellowish liver, a chance to be free from the mean slavery of nicotine.

lowish liver, a chance to be free from the mean slavery of nicotine.

Get rid of the vicious habit. Lengthen your life. Become contented and spread happiness among others. Enjoy tranquillity combined with forceful thought and real efficiency.

I know what will conquer the tobacco habit in three days. You gain the victory completely and privately at home.

My new book will be very interesting to you. It will come to you in a plain wrapper, free, postpaid. You will be surprised and delighted if you write to Edward J. Woods, WT-103, Station F, New York, N. Y.

He Quit Cigarettes



GAINED OVER 30 POUNDS

"I smoked cigarettes ever since a boy. From six to eight sacks of tobacco I used weekly," states Mr. S. H. Ferguson.

Cigarettes were doing me great harm. I became so nervous that I couldn't sleep until I smoked. Each morning I had an awful taste in my mouth.

"Several times I tried to quit by will-power, but it just seemed that I would go wild if I couldn't have cigarettes.

"I had almost given up hope of ever quitting until one day I sent for a free book by Mr. Woods that told me what to do. After learning the way, I quit easily in 3 days and haven't touched a cigarette in years. I have gained over 30 pounds and cannot praise the method too highly. I say to every cigarette smoker—if you can't quit without help get this book," so says Mr. Ferguson, of Crumps Park.

The foregoing remarks are like those of many other men who have been freed from the habit of smoking cigarettes, pipe or cigars or who have been chewing tobacco or dipping snuff excessively.

Get this book. It is free; postpaid to you. Cut this out and show others.

Write at once to Edward J. Woods, WC-103, Station F, New York, N. Y.



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Get a small box of Oil of Korein (in capsules) at any drug store. Follow simple directions and reduce at least one pound, average, weekly under \$100 guarantee. Absolutely wholesome; endorsed by physicians. The fat seems to melt away. By proper reduction you will make wonderful gain in physical and mental energy. Add years to your life. Remember Oil of Korein. Non-purgative; no thyroid. At the druggists; or write for FREE BOOK to Korein Company, NG-103, Station F, New York City. Best method in the world to become slender quickly, safely, inexpensively—and stay thin. Every over-stout man or woman should lose weight and improve personality.



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Hundreds of thousands of ambitious men have achieved success through I. C. S. help in the past 27 years—over 100,000 are now studying, getting ready for the big jobs ahead. Join them and make your life something to be proud of—you can do it.

Mark and mail the coupon TODAY and find out how; it won't obligate you in the least.

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21 Jewel Burlington

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BE SLENDER
It's Easy Enough

Reduce 10 to 60 lbs. comfortably. No starving, no strenuous exercising, no drastic drugs. Improve your figure; become cheerful and healthy; add years to your life and life to your years! At the druggist's buy small box of Oil of Korein; follow simple directions. Or write for FREE BOOK (in plain wrapper). Reduce Weight Happily. to Korein Co., RA-601, Station F, New York.

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Explain, without obligating me, how I can qualify for the position, or in the subject, before which I mark X.

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☐ Spanish
☐ French
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Name _____

Present Occupation _____

Street and No. _____

City _____ State _____

I WAS BALD

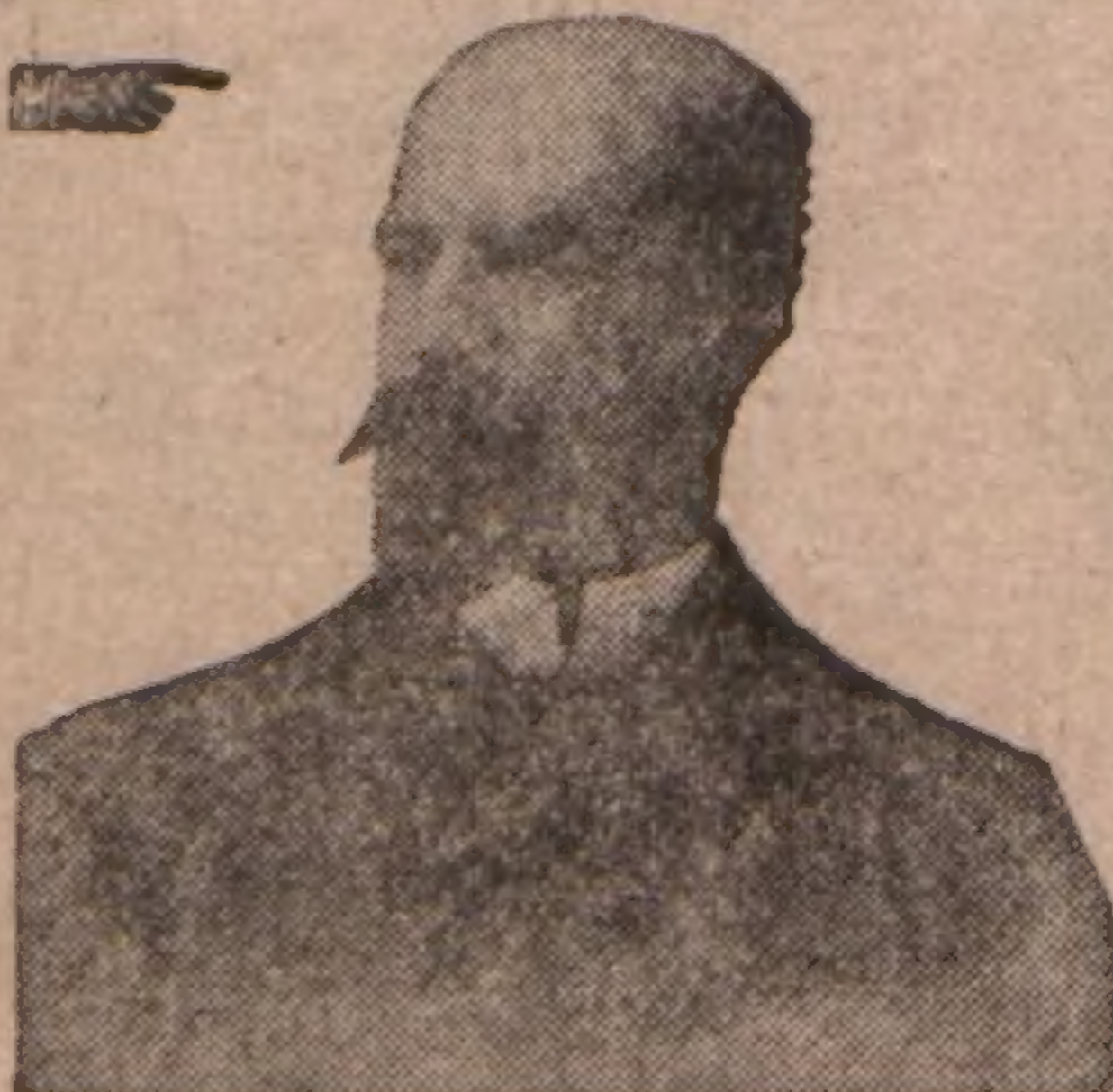
AFFIDAVIT OF HAIR GROWTH

While completely bald on the top of my head as shown in my photograph which I am accompanying this affidavit, I adopted a hair cosmetic and formula given me by an old Cherokee Indian. Within six months my head was covered with a new and luxuriant growth of hair. I now supply Ko-tal-ko, a pomade prepared according to the original formula which resulted in my own hair growth. The statements in my advertisement are true and my photographs are correct.

John Hart Brittain

Personally appeared before me, John Hart Brittain, this fifth day of June, 1917, who signed the foregoing in my presence and who being duly sworn, attested that same is true.

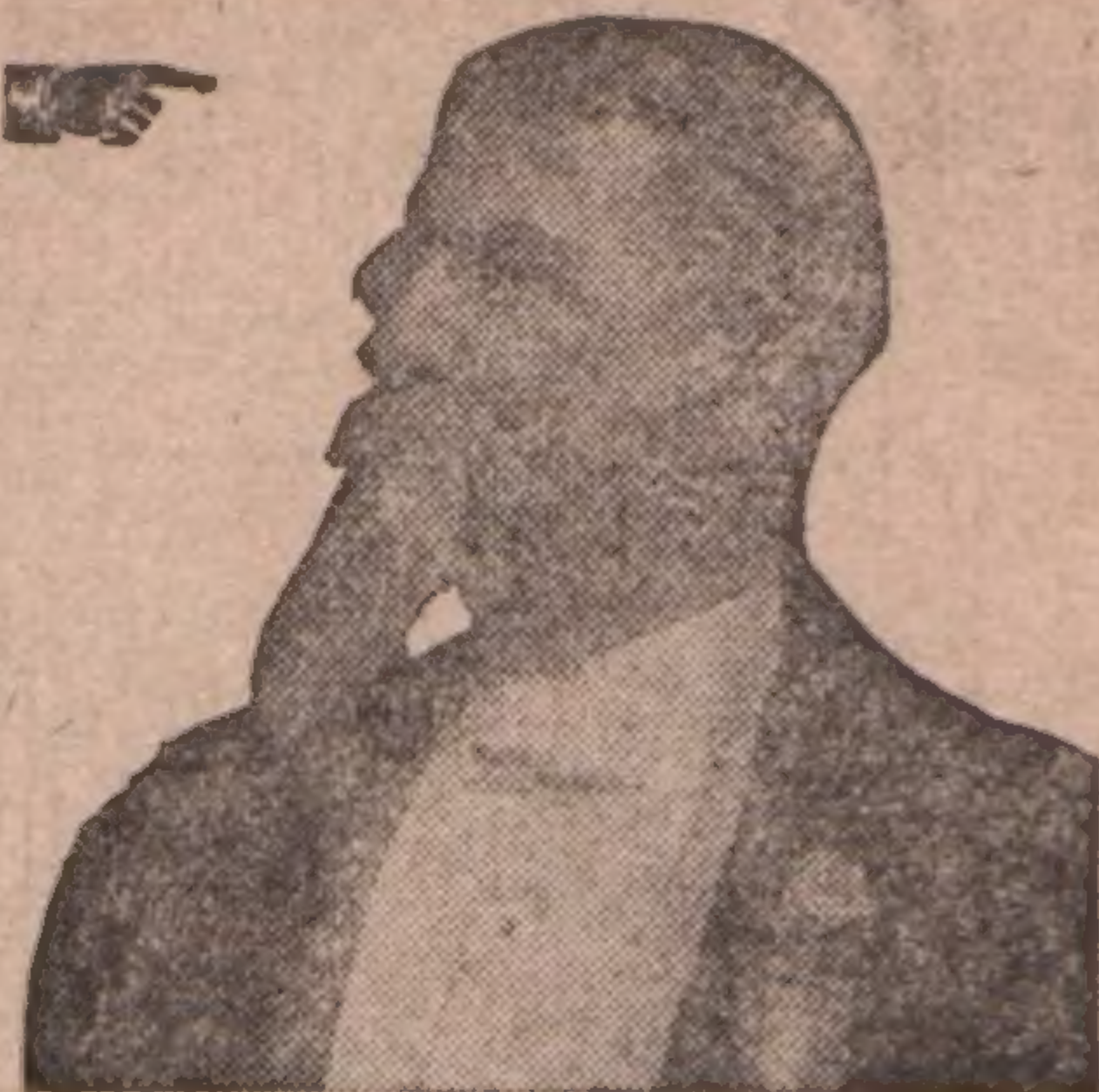
John H. Brittain
Notary Public



From former photograph of J. H. Brittain

So positive am I that Kotalko is absolutely unsurpassed for aiding in hair growth that I offer it under \$300.00 cash guarantee. You may obtain a testing box of Kotalko compounded according to the original genuine Indian principle, by sending me 25 cents in silver or stamps to the above address.

FULL HAIR GROWTH NOW



From recent photograph of J. H. Brittain

In early manhood I was troubled with dandruff and my hair began to fall out.

Being naturally proud—call it vanity if you will—I used one hair tonic, lotion, etc., after another, in the hope of preventing the loss of my hair. Nothing saved my hair, however, and I resigned myself to the probability of lifelong baldness.

The engravings here printed are from actual photographs. The baldness was greater than apparent in the earlier picture as it extended over the back of my head.

In the course of my career, I had business with certain members of the Cherokee tribe of Indians and met a "medicine man" who gave me a pomade which I agreed to apply to my scalp.

To my surprise and joy, tiny hairs began to appear and gradually a growth of hair was developed all over my scalp. It was amazing to observe the improvement from week to week. A prolific hair growth resulted and has never left me, although many years have passed.

FREE TO YOU

The Cherokee wizard's secret or principle was imparted to me and I am willing to send the recipe free if you merely write, asking for it, enclosing stamp. Address John Hart Brittain, 150 East 32d St., BM-103, New York, N. Y. Some marvelous results have been reported. The pomade is called Kotalko. It is for men, women and children.

Kotalko is different from all the liquid lotions and hair tonics, washes, shampoos, etc. It is in a class by itself. It is to be applied with the finger tips where the hair is weak or where the scalp is bald.



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Here is our New Style E. D. L. Phonograph—the latest improvement—without the horn. It is a perfect beauty. Mahogany finish, tone arm black japanned, nickel winding crank, accurately constructed, smooth running spring motor, speed regulator, stop lever and 6 3/4 turn table. New improved sound box with mica diaphragm.

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Both lateral and vertical cut, 6, 7 or 8 inches. This machine will give you more entertainment than anything you ever owned. Strong and durable. No parts to get out of order.

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E. D. LIFE, 337 W. Madison St.,

Dept. 7T46

Chicago



FREE
TO
YOU

Would you like to add several pounds of healthy flesh? Do you long for the joys of tranquillity and robust health? Do you wish to add to your efficiency—to become able to do better work, thereby increasing your earning power?

Here's a prescription: *Avena sativa*, a highly concentrated extract of the most powerful nutritive principle of oats; phosphorus, the renowned nutritive nerve stimulant; *nuxvomica*, the widely recognized stimulant tonic; *muira puama*, a strong vitalizing root extract. These ingredients should improve the appetite and aid in the development of health, flesh and muscle when taken in properly prepared form in connection with special simple directions.

These ingredients, in carefully compounded proportions for your safe personal use, are found in Woods V Tabules, of which you may obtain test packet, by sending 10 cts. to E. J. Woods, Inc., VB-103, Station F, New York. Also remember that Woods V Tabules are sold by many druggists.

For underweight, lack of development, general weakness, brain fog, exhaustion due to overwork or excesses; to combat bad effects of smoking or chewing or snuff using; for nervousness, spells of depression, after effects of long strain upon the nerves or organs of the body, paleness, for overcoming the depressing effects of secret bad habits, for timidity, feelings of fear, lack of good blood, enervation and numerous other forms of weakness, try Woods V Tabules.

DRINK HABIT If you want to conquer in yourself or another, quickly, completely, write for FREE BOOK. Brings joy and ambition into life. Thousands saved. Free.

MOUSTACHE

To accelerate the growth of a Moustache use KOTALKO. A small box will be mailed for 25 cents; a large box, for \$1.00. Postpaid in plain package. Cash or stamps. John Hart Brittain, 150 East 32d St., (BC-103), New York, N. Y.

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 638 Too Good to Last; or, Six Months In the Wall Street Money Market.
 639 Dick, the Boy Lawyer; or, Winning a Big Fee.
 640 Broker Dexter's New Boy; or, A Young Innocent In Wall Street.
 641 From Mill to Millions; or, The Poor Boy Who Became a Steel Magnate.
 642 Three Game Speculators; or, The Wall Street Boys' Syndicate.
 643 A Stroke of Luck; or, The Boy Who Made Money In Oil.
 644 Little Hal, the Boy Trader; or, Picking Up Money In Wall Street.
 645 On the Gold Coast; or, The Treasure of the Stranded Ship.
 646 Lured by the Market; or, A Boy's Big Deal In Wall Street.
 647 Trading Tom; or, The Boy Who Bought Everything.
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- 655 Fough and Ready Dick; or, A Young Express Agent's Luck.
 656 Tipped Off by Telegraph; or, Shaking Up the Wall Street "Bears."
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 658 Marty, the Messenger; or, Capturing Coin In Wall Street.
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